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TRIBUTE TO ENGLAND

AN ANTHOLOGY

Author of:

INTRODUCTION TO MODERN POETRY

KEY TO MODERN ENGLISH POETRY

TRIBUTE TO ENGLAND

AN ANTHOLOGY

by

MARTIN GILKES

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INTRODUCTION

THERE are too many anthologies already. Treasuries, Granaries, Garlands, Sprays and Posies from Poesy's Garden, they are beyond count. Is there any justification for adding another pebble to the beach ?

I think so.

England's story is an epic story, at least as stirring as the famous tale of Troy and infinitely more various. It is the story of the making of a nation, practically out of nothing one might say : at any rate out of nothing more than a motley collection of wild and savage tribes. We may applaud that final speech of Faulconbridge with which Shakespeare ends his play *King John.*

> " This England never did and never shall
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror."

It is a proud boast and makes a grand final curtain ; but like most proud boasts, it will not bear examination. Lord Macaulay is nearer to the fact. " I shall relate," he says in the opening chapter of his *History*, " how our country from a state of ignominious vassalage rose to the place of umpire among European powers."

Conquest was a commonplace of our early history. There were the Romans. They came—and went, leaving behind something of themselves which endures even to this day. After the Romans came the Danes, to be followed by successive waves of victorious invaders until the coming of the Normans. The Normans were the real makers of England, just as they were the re-builders of civilization

throughout Europe after the chaos of the Dark Ages. It is curious that no historian yet has done full justice to this fascinating and extraordinary people, who left abiding traces of themselves as far south as Sicily and as far east as Cyprus and even Jerusalem. They had a flair for conquest; but they had also, what is much more rare, an equal flair for settlement after victory. Once the struggle was over, they were concerned not so much to dispossess as to rule and mix. They gave to their conquered subjects an admixture of vigorous new blood, something of their own toughness and aggressive strength. At the same time, whatever they found good in the inheritance and traditions of the older race, they kept: they left it free to develop and ultimately to be absorbed. That is what happened in England after the Norman victory at Hastings.

Thus our heritage goes back further than 1066: it goes back indeed into the remote past. The story properly begins in the mists of pre-history. For who can say how much the country-side itself, English rivers and English woods, pasture and moor, and more than all perhaps, the encircling sea, have contributed to the making of the English People?

A great story needs great telling: and if it be true that poetry is "the highest speech of man"—which is at least a possible definition, as far as it goes—then it is through the mouths of the poets that the story ought to be told. There is no lack of poetry to choose from, but selection is not quite so easy as it looks. Given the requisite industry and patience, one might follow the lines of a school textbook and compile a kind of History-without-tears, with an appropriate poem attached to each significant date. It has been done and could be done again—but only at the cost of including an intolerable amount of rubbish which nobody either wants or ought to want to read. Logically, no doubt, it should be the most memorable events in our history that have inspired the most memorable poetry; but the poets

have by no means always been so obliging. As often as not one finds that some minor incident of slight, if any, historical importance has produced a first-class poem. For example, an insignificant little sea-fight off the Azores has given us the " Ballad of the *Revenge* " : whereas an event of cardinal importance to the historian, the signing of the Magna Charta, has not been commemorated even by one single line that is worth preserving.

And further, it is unfortunate that the poets, even the greatest of them, are not always at their best, when they turn to history for inspiration. A great name is no certain guarantee of a great, or even a moderately good, poem. It is not from lack of goodwill. On the contrary, it may be that the poet, filled with patriotic fervour, is led into writing what he feels he ought to write : an initial error that loads the dice against him from the start. The glamour of history, the accumulated force of mass-suggestion, have been too much for him. He writes (as he thinks) in all sincerity ; but the whole of himself is not behind the poem, and the result can be little better than a conventional sermon on copy-book lines—or worse, a flat and unexciting effusion without life or sparkle. Or it may be that the poet is writing to order : and the odds against his producing anything like his best work under those conditions are almost overwhelming. Our laureates are the classical example—perhaps not so much an example as an object-lesson. If only they had all shown the common sense of the aged Wordsworth, who only accepted the laureateship on condition that he should not be required to provide an ode for every State occasion !

Any anthology on purely historical lines is bound to be more or less a patchwork affair : and the more catholic and comprehensive an editor strives to be, the more indifferent poetry he finds himself obliged to include. This book is meant to tell England's story—but by implication rather

than in comprehensive detail. It is not an anthology of the leading and most notable events in English history, as related by the poets; it is a collection of the good and memorable poetry which has been inspired at various times and in various periods by moving incidents in that story. Anthologies are primarily for pleasure and appreciation; but neither purpose is helped by mixing authentic diamond with inferior paste in the same show-case. I have, therefore, been concerned not so much with historical consecution or the selection of less well-known poetry which other anthologies have overlooked, as with the essential quality of the poetry which this book contains. It will have served its purpose if it can stir anyone who may read it to exclaim: "This is great poetry indeed that England has inspired," and to add as a necessary corollary: "it is a great country and a great story that has inspired such poetry as this." I have set a standard to which in the face of all temptation I have rigidly adhered: and I have set that standard high.

This means inevitably the exclusion of certain things which one only gives up with regret. There are, for instance, those popular rhymes and jingles, of which not a few have become almost as familiar as our nursery rhymes. Spontaneously generated in times of crisis, or deliberately aimed to hit a special occasion, they have a very intimate connection with England's story. Some, indeed, have actually affected the course of history. A catchy little rhyme, with a tune to match, whistled King James II off his throne. "Lillibulero," as everyone knows, though it is not everyone who is familiar with the words. And the song of the Poor Old Woman, the Shan Van Vocht, originating no one knows where, ran through the streets of Dublin and Cork in the dark days of 1798, and set the whole country aflame:

> "Oh! the French are in the Bay,
> They'll be here by break of day,
> And the Orange will decay,
> Says the Shan Van Vocht . . ."

and that same voice was heard again, with words altered to suit the times, in the "trouble" of 1919.

Familiarity is a dangerous standard by which to judge. If, as the proverb says, it breeds contempt, it can just as often turn geese into swans. There are our national and patriotic songs. They are familiar and they are stirring enough; but apart from the music who ever troubles to consider the words? "Land of Hope and Glory," for instance, everyone knows as a poem of patriotic sentiment set to a popular tune by Elgar—but whether the poem itself is good or bad, or even what was the name of the man who wrote it, how many either know or care? Music indeed hath charms. The better the music, in fact, the more difficult it is to think of the words in isolation from it. More often than not this is a blessing in disguise: for inferior poetry seems to have a fatal attraction for composers, good and bad alike. There are, of course, exceptions, where fine poetry and fine music meet. There is, for example, fortunately for our purpose, that celebrated song in praise of England from "King Arthur":

"Fairest isle, all isles excelling . . ."

where Purcell's music is matched with Dryden's words. But such miracles are all too rare. Mostly our national songs are "words-to-music," and very little, if anything, more. "Rule, Britannia!" which is probably the most popular and most widely known, finds a place in nearly every anthology of patriotic flavour. It goes to a fine and rousing tune, and is the very thing for Reunions and Parades and Recruiting meetings. But forget the admirable music of Dr. Arne, and consider simply on their merits James Thomson's words. Is it possible that the gentle author of "The Seasons" could have been responsible for this:

"The nations not so blest as thee
Must, in their turn, to tyrants fall,
While thou shall flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all" . . .?

Apart from criticism of the grammar, what can one say of it? That "it breathes in every line a fervent and single-minded patriotism"? That indeed, it does—and anyone whose memory goes back to the days of the Great War, might say exactly the same of its once-so-famous Teutonic counterpart, "Deutschland über Alles," which in its own time and its own country was equally popular and equally admired.

Patriotism, of course, of some sort, must be the underlying motif of every poem included in this book; but patriotism is by no means the same thing at different periods in a nation's history. "Love of one's Country" is the dictionary definition, and nothing at first sight could seem more simple. But look back over the various stages of development in the history of any nation, and both terms of the definition are seen to be variables. Love may be a passionate affection that is indistinguishable from blind idolatry ("My Country, right or wrong!"). Or it may be an affection equally strong and equally sincere that is critical and discriminating. And "One's Country"—what exactly is meant by that? By no means the same thing at different times. The royal person of the King: the national emblem and symbol, the Flag: the Crown and the Empire, Dominions and Dependencies: the whole united body of the people—all these at various times have signified for men of patriotic feeling the "Country," to which they have given their love and for which they have been willing to die.

The fact is, the life of a nation is like the life of a man, a series of developing stages. At first the story is almost entirely martial. From small beginnings, like a new boy in a rough school, the little nation fights its way to power and position: and throughout the early stages one expects a fierce, crude, naked kind of patriotism. One expects it, too, even in the adolescent stages. For a certain violence and extravagance are natural to the young man, when he begins

to find and feel his strength. He is establishing his position in the world " against all comers." Hence those magnificent outbursts of genuine poetry, the purple patches in which Shakespeare lets himself go in praise of the country he loved so well. It is true that all these utterances are put into the mouth of characters in the plays, and to that extent are character-pieces. Yet who can help feeling that the poet has gone beyond what is strictly and dramatically necessary, that he steps forward with the actor on the stage and speaks something of his own mind ? Incidentally, one may regret that our modern actors seldom allow the purple patches to glow as richly purple as Shakespeare himself obviously intended. There was nothing meek or mild or decorous about Elizabethan adolescence.

But after adolescence comes maturity. A man, as he grows up, learns more about himself and about other people round him. He has made his own position and feels secure enough to take stock of his own shortcomings. He no longer needs to keep assuring himself of his own superiority, but can afford to recognize that others need not necessarily be his inferiors in all respects. It is the same with nations. " My country, right or wrong ! " gives place to a more sober and more critical kind of patriotism ; but it is still patriotism. The flame burns just as clear and just as fiercely at its core.

The story of the making of a nation is not only a martial saga :

> " Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they struck :
> With their own blows they hurt themselves . . ."

That part of the story, the inspiring tale of battles and heroic deeds, of courage unforgettable and unforgotten, and of sacrifice, runs right through England's history. It is continuous—from the struggle with the Romans to the last great European War. But grand and stirring though it may be, it is not the whole. Peace hath its victories—and its conflicts, no less than war. There is the social story of the

English people. That, too, is saga : the story of the gradual awakening of a great people to consciousness of its own power and responsibility, the steady growth of the ideal of individual freedom. Even the most cynical, even the most disillusioned, must acknowledge a progress. Slow it may have been and the end is not yet ; but is it not a progress —from feudal herd led sheep-like by a king to the community which the nation is to-day ? That is England as we know her, a community jealous of individual rights and concerned to preserve that liberty of speech and thought which has been so hardly won—and one ought to add, remembering what has happened and is still happening in certain quarters of the world to-day, liberty of the person, too.

It may be said that such an ideal is far from being realized, that Jerusalem is not yet built (or anything like it), in England's green and pleasant land. That is only too obviously true. Nevertheless, it is equally true that England is one of the great democracies of the world. She stands in the eyes of the rest of the world for more than dominion and power and possession. She stands for the championship and preservation of a definite idea (ideal if one likes to call it so), a method of life, a way of living. That is the democratic idea and all that it includes and implies.

And what is the Democratic Idea ? It is the creed of everyone who believes that true liberty is a thing worth having and worth saving. Put shortly, in essentials it is this :

A nation is nothing more nor less than the individuals who compose it, not a class nor a part of them, but all together : and in consequence the national interest is the interest of all. What supremely matters—and in the long run the only thing that matters, is not material power or the acquisition of public or private wealth in any of its various forms, but the content and quality of individual lives. And

since the power of thought is man's most precious possession, it follows that all thought must be free, likewise the expression of it both in speech and writing, even though this means the expression of minority opinions that clash violently with those of the majority. But when it comes to action, the minority must accept the majority decision, voluntarily and without reservation: for such voluntary acceptance is implicit in the conception of democratic freedom. For all reasonable beings persuasion is the proper instrument of change; but this does not mean that "compulsion is incompatible with the principles of democracy." Without compulsion how many taxes would be fairly and fully paid into the public purse? On the other hand, coercion in any form, unless confined to what can be proved—and publicly proved to contravene the established law, can only result in corruption of the public will: for the established law, though naturally it must be subject to a certain time-lag, nevertheless represents the general national conscience.

The world to-day is the battleground of two powerful rival theories: each of them passionately and (it must be acknowledged) sincerely held, and each of them capable, if challenged, of making out a case for itself. On the one hand, there is compulsion: and what does it matter whether a nation be Communist in complexion, like Russia, or Fascist, like Germany and Italy? The principle is still the same. Decide for the whole people what is the right way of living and of thinking, and then by every means possible force everyone to conform. On the other hand, there is the principle of liberty, the democratic idea. And it is in the liberal camp that England stands to-day.

Such a development, the difficult and painful transition from feudal herd to national community, has not been achieved without a long and at times a bitter struggle. Consequently the poetry that touches the social story has not the same high and confident ring as the poetry that tells

of England's wars and triumphs over her external enemies. How should it ? The poet's eye is turned inward : he is looking at the faults he finds at home—abuses (and there were plenty of them) that must be remedied, " blots on the fair face of England " that must be removed. It is, it must be poetry sometimes of denunciation, sometimes of bitter satire, sometimes of sorrowful lament ; but always of dissatisfaction.

It may be Pope, inveighing against the polished corruption of his own day :

> " See all our Nobles begging to be Slaves !
> See, all our Fools aspiring to be Knaves ! "

It may be Wordsworth, looking back to Milton :

> " Thou shouldst be living at this hour !
> England hath need of thee : she is a fen
> of stagnant waters . . ."

It is poetry of the surgeon's knife, and all of it is shadowed by the winter of our discontent. But discontent is the necessary vehicle of progress : and is capable of producing poetry as genuine—and as genuinely patriotic, as any of the poetry that is usually called by that name. All this is part of the story, which to be complete must tell of travail as well as triumph. Blake's " Jerusalem " and Mrs. Browning's " Cry of the Children " and the savage astringent war-poems of Wilfrid Owen have as rightful a place in it as the loudest and most triumphant patriotic pæan.

I have meant in this book to include all sides of the many-sided story. I have meant it to contain—and I think that it does contain, the best and nothing but the best of the tribute which the poets have paid to the country of their birth. It is a tribute, like Joseph's coat, of many colours. It is woven of praise and of dissatisfaction, of uncritical adulation and fiercely critical satire, of high hope and at times of something akin to despair ; but there is not a line

of it that has not been inspired by a deep-rooted affection and a deep-seated native pride. "Blessed shall be the city in the day when the songs of her children rise up around her."

I have included as few notes as possible, since the poetry's the thing and not an editor's helpful comments on it. Such notes as I have inserted are merely to jog the reader's memory, and save the bother of turning up a work of reference. I have, for instance, prefaced Scott's lines on Flodden with a short account of the place and the battle. For though most of us could cope with Agincourt without referring to a history, Flodden is not generally so familiar. Ask anyone off-hand where and when and why it was, and in my experience not one in twenty can do more than opine vaguely that "it was a famous victory." And I have appended to the passages from Chaucer's "Prologue" a small glossary, of which more readers, I suspect, than would care to acknowledge it, will be glad to take advantage.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to say that the date-headings which I have given refer to the subject-matter and not to the time at which the poem may happen to have been written.

And I would again remind the reader that this book is an Anthology in the strict and proper sense of the word. It is meant to give pleasure and to rouse admiration. Nations breed the poets they deserve. Our English literature is one of the great literatures of the world, and the finest flower of it is our poetry. Only a great nation with a long and honourable and eventful history could have inspired a body of poetry at once so large and of such indisputable quality.

MARTIN GILKES.

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I

INVOCATION

This England

I.

This England

DEAR Country, O how dearly dear
Ought thy remembrance and perpetual band
Be to thy foster Child, that from thy hand
Did common breath and nouriture receive ?
How brutish is it not to understand,
How much to her we owe, that all us gave,
That gave unto us all, what ever good we have.

EDMUND SPENSER : *The Faerie Queene.*

2.

O WHAT see you from your gray hill ?
The sun is low, the air all gold,
Warm lies the slumbrous land and still.
I see the river with deep and shallow,
I see the ford, I hear the mill ;
I see the cattle upon the fallow ;
And there the manor half in trees,
And there the church and the acre hallow
Where lie your dead in their feretories
Of clay and dust and crumble of peat,
With a stone or two to their memories :
Your dead who with their sweat kept sweet
This heritage of gray and green,
This England now the richer for it.
I see the yews and the thatch between,
The smoke that tells of cottage and hearth,
And all as it has ever been
From the beginning on this old earth.
And so it is even as it was
From the beginning in Hodge's garth,
While kings and statesmen flaunt and pass,
Kings and lords and knights of the shire,
Bishops in lawn (rare flesh to be grass !),
Priest and schoolman, clerk and esquire ;
Danes and Normans and Scottishmen,
Frenchmen, Brunswickers, son after sire,
They come and conquer, they ruffle and reign,
They rule, they ride, they spend, they grudge,

They bicker their threescore years and ten,
They slay, and thieve, and go ; but Hodge
The Englishman stoops to fork and flail,
And serves Saint Use, and will not budge,
But drives the furrow and fills the pail,
Raining sweat lest the land go dry :
He sees his masters, he gives them hail
With hand to forelock as they ride by—
They that eat what he doth bake,
They that hold what he must buy,
They that spend what he doth make,
They that are rich by other men's toil ;
They of the sword and he of the rake,
The lords of the land, the son of the soil !

MAURICE HEWLETT : *Song of the Plow.*

II

BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST

3.

SEE, how the goddess, Mother of the Year,
Her virgin youth reneweth ! late, having doffed
Her russet homely weed of winter teen,
She takes new raiment, on her, of high tide,
With silver knops and buds of living gold.
The earth her garden is, wherein she goeth,
As Dawn's sweet breath ; and all, with green, bedecks,
And gentle flowers, like a bride-chamber floor.
Teems earth's wide bosom, of much sunny rain,
As in what tide the firstlings she brought forth,
Of love, in the fair field of a new world.
A shrilling subtil ferment is abroad,
Like harping small, of iris-winged flies.
Ean ewes, in shepherds' pinfolds, without throes ;
And fallow-beasts couch, in the fern ; where goeth
By, Samoth's god : in thickets, they bring forth.
Comes every kind, that harbours in green wood ;
Run the dun does ;
That stand then, mongst the hazel-thicks, at gaze.
Through moor, through moss, and many an oozy ford,
And bourn, they tread ; that, in his hollow brinks,
His pebble-streams, in reverence of the god,
Withholds ; that might they, dryfoot, overpass.
Through launds, and by sweet-smelling underwoods,
Which guirlanded with honeysuckle locks ;
Where windflower blows, and dew-dropt daffodillies,
With robin, medled in the thicket grass ;
And loved maylilies, most of heavenly grace,

And pure ambrosial breath : where vermeil-white,
Are blossomed boughs, of cherry and the thorn ;
And strew wood-apple blosms, their forest path.
Be these wild garden-grounds of Britain's woods.
Bow down their sprays, the latticed boughs of oaks ;
And seem to crown the Britons' antique god,
With budded bronze. Bordering these breathing pines,
Beyond the forest, lies fair champaign, wide ;
Sweet with wild thyme, and gift of the sun-god ;
Which flower of broom gilds widewhere, and the arms
Of thorny honied whin, that heathbell shrouds ;
In whose frail trembling crocks, the wild bee sleeps.
And, lo, in the element, follow, from green woods ;
(Which druids' pomp o'erhang,) melodious fowl,
Like chapelet, singing praises to the god :
Which past ; see, Britons' fields ! where now West wind
O'erthrows the barley blade, that tender springs,
To the colts' knees. There, putting flower to flower,
This people gather poesies ; and before
The sacred cart, them strew of Samoth's god.
Though, daily, some turn home, each morn more grows
The sacred throngs. And when that blissful sun,
Loosed the god's steeds, is from the earth, gone down
The Britons, which have washed in some nigh stream,
Their garments and their flesh, to keep them pure,
Sup of what little in their scrips they bare.
Then, nightlong, making leafy boughs their beds,
The harps they hear and holy chant of druids ;
Whereto, of waterbrooks, soft bubbling noise,
Makes answering voice ; and dew lies on the grass.
Surges blithe lavrock, in the rising sun ;
And chants, at heaven's high gate, that new-born god,
Which looks, with flaming locks, above the world.
Then waken all sweet fowl that sing in the morn.
Hark, their full-throated song, in breasts so small !

Hark, siskin, ruddock, linnet and the wren,
Odzee-zit-spirrink ! each his leman call.
With train of little birds, flits spotted gawk,
From hill to croft. Rides antique Samoth's god,
(Midst Britons, which bear rowan sprays and sheen
Green oaken boughs and holm, from sacred groves,
Devout, forth, in their hands, by these wild paths ;)
Aye tottering image, in new harnessed cart ;
With guirlands, deckt. Now they, at length, approach,
(Foot-weary throngs,) the sun-god's sacred plain ;
Where nations dead, in grave hills, lie around ;
Sun's famed wheel-temple, of the hanging-stones :

CHARLES M. DOUGHTY : *Dawn in Britain.*

4. A.D. 51.

Caractacus, who organized British resistance to the Romans in the West of England, was decisively defeated, possibly somewhere in the neighbourhood of Leintwardine on the river Teene. With his wife and daughter and his brothers he was taken to Rome and led through the streets in his conqueror's triumph. Subsequently he was pardoned by the Emperor Claudius, but retained in honourable custody until his death.

BEING come Caractacus, and Embla and peers,
With long disease, to gates of hostile Rome ;
When it is night, and no man in the ways ;
To the Gemonium, (prison named of sighs ;)
All brought, in covered carts, therein were cast :
Where hidden, in loathsome den, beneath the earth,
As in a tomb, from heaven's cheerful light ;
They await the ignominy of most cruel deaths !
By strangling, at base hands of vilain wights.
Yet erst will Claudius show Caractacus ;
(King, which these nine years hath withstood his legions ;)
A public spectacle, in the Roman streets.
Behold then, on set day, those royal Britons,
Sad, squalid, chained, are lifted, bleak of hew,
Up, from that dreadful lower prison-pit,
Of Servius Tullius ; (which, four-paces deep,
Is ceiled with stone, beneath the Roman street ;)
Into sun's blissful ray, to march, from weight
Of night, to death ! Behold Caractacus !
With pomp, (great barbare Island's king !) led forth ;
By the world's sovereign-City's thronged paved street ;
Loud trumpets sound ! Much insolent concourse is

Descended, in Rome's ways, of mingled speech ;
(For flow the world's offscourings now by Rome,
Wherein are infinite slaves of many wars.)
Stand, on all foot-ways, Rome's proud citizens,
Ranged ; bove whom framed be scaffolds, in long rows ;
Where sit patricians, and Rome's senators ;
And ambassaders, with purpled magistrates ;
Women look proudly on, from every porch ;
Stairs, pillared temples. Other throng house-tops ;
Where great Britannic king Caractacus,
Their Sacred Way along, towards his death,
Shall pass. He cometh, lo, chained, like salvage beast !
Afoot. With him fares Embla ; and, twixt them both,
Their little daughter traces, Maid-of-Kent.
His brethren peers, come after, in Rome-street.
As, on Jugurtha bound, all Romans gaze,
On thee ; (with ribald jests, they mock thy looks,)
Sword-of-the-gods, divine Caractacus !
Passeth forth godlike, pale, Caractacus,
(Whose only arm a nation's shelter was !)
Betrayed, not taken, in wars ; midst dog-faced press.
The Briton king, erect, magnanimous,
Vouchsafes not them behold. The stings have pierced,
Of ire, his noble breast ; proud sorrow slays.
On Embla's looks, long-time, all Romans gaze !
Though she, from prison-pit, come lean and wan ;
So fair a woman's face, is none in Rome.
Her tresst locks part are wounden, like to crown,
Upon her noble front ; part, backlong hang,
Like veil of gold. She, sad-faced Britain's queen,
Hath a royal majesty, in her countenance !
Like snowdrop pale, (the innocent oppressed !)
Their maiden child, she leads on by the hand.
(These oft speak, twixt them both, in Briton tongue.)
That little daughter dreads swart looks of Romans ;

And cannot choose but weep, because these chains
The king, her father, bears : nor wots, (amaze
Her, so sore, all things ;) they wend to their deaths !
  Those peers, that follow, of Caractacus,
(His brethren named,) seem harts, mongst wolves of Romans.
The cruel Romans murmur, whilst they pass ;
What joy were, see these enemies cast to beasts !
  One led, lo, of the royal war-cart steeds,
Which Caradoc fed, with the white barley ears ;
And Embla's white hand combed, in far-off Britain ;
His mane, long-drooping, stains yet warlike woad.
Is he the last of those which drew the chariot
And royal sons of great Cunobelin ;
With silver bit, and barded to the ground,
With gingling little chains : dight his breast harness,
With coral studs, and emailled scaly brass,
Fashioned like sheen spring-leaves and bright-hewed flowers.
Lace, of great pearls, hangs on his neck, of glass.
  Not as when Hart-foot, with his dam, Blue-mane ;
Or his yoke-fellow, swift Gold-hoof, he ran,
Under bright silver yoke-tree of Cunobelin ;
And shook the hulver-beam of the king's chariot.
Wound-weary old, this famous battle-steed,
Gaul's long paved way, and, sith, vast Alps hath passed.
On his broad chine, hath carrion leanness seized.
His bronze-shod hooves, which wont, in island Britain,
To trample Roman shields, uneath tread forth.
Of stature low, he goeth, in Rome's paved street,
With drooping crest. And heard, mongst mocking Romans,
Was word, from mouth to mouth, Whether is this
The horse or ass, of king Caractacus ?
  They gaze on arms upborne, of tall blue warriors,
On staves and tables, of two Briton kings.
But most Manannan's hauberk Rome admires ;
That casts, divine, a strange victorious gleam !

Men gaze on Caradoc's helm, of lucid steel,
Whose crest that dragon of his royal house ;
And golden belt of strength, and tremble Romans :
And the king's glaive, which heapmeal hath slain soldiers.
The same is noised, was sword renowned, that Brennus
Cast in those antique balances of old Rome !
Yet seen borne collars, kingly ornaments,
Gold frets, broad brooches, rings and long-spired bracelets,
Cups, silver mead-horns of old Verulam kings ;
Gold bends of charioteers, bright tyres of steeds ;
Then spoil of infinite bronze, lead, silver, tin.
Last princes, hostages, of submitted tribes,
Of Britons march ; about whose noble necks,
Wreathed torques shine, of the fine burnt gold of Britain !

CHARLES M. DOUGHTY : *Dawn in Britain.*

5. A.D. 61.

Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, who inhabited a stretch of country which roughly corresponded to the Norfolk and Suffolk of to-day, led a desperate rising of the Britons against their Roman conquerors. Successful at first, she was finally defeated and took poison to avoid capture and all that it would mean. For Suetonius Paullinus, the Roman governor and commander, was a man, as Tacitus the historian has recorded, " whose policy towards the conquered was harsh and arrogant and exhibited the cruelty of one who was avenging private wrongs."

WHEN the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods ;

Sage beneath a spreading oak
Sat the Druid, hoary chief ;
Every burning word he spoke
Full of rage, and full of grief.

" Princess ! if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

" Rome shall perish—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt ;
Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

" Rome, for empire far renown'd,
Tramples on a thousand states ;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark ! the Gaul is at her gates !

" Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name ;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

" Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

" Regions Caesar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway ;
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they."

Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow ;
Rush'd to battle, fought, and died ;
Dying hurl'd them at the foe ;

" Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due ;
Empire is on us bestow'd,
Shame and ruin wait for you."

WILLIAM COWPER : *Boadicea.*

III

AFTER THE CONQUEST. PLANTAGENET

6. A.D. 1170.

The Murder of Thomas à Becket

THOMAS

Peace, and be at peace with your thoughts and visions.
These things had to come to you and you to accept them.
This is your share of the eternal burden,
The perpetual glory. This is one moment,
But know that another
Shall pierce you with a sudden painful joy
When the figure of God's purpose is made complete.
You shall forget these things, toiling in the household,
You shall remember them, droning by the fire,
When age and forgetfulness sweeten memory
Only like a dream that has often been told
And often been changed in the telling. They will seem unreal.
Human kind cannot bear very much reality.

(*Enter* PRIESTS).

PRIESTS (*severally*)

My Lord, you must not stop here. To the minster.
Through the cloister. No time to waste. They are coming back, armed. To the altar, to the altar.

THOMAS

All my life they have been coming, these feet. All my life
I have waited. Death will come only when I am worthy,
And if I am worthy, there is no danger.
I have therefore only to make perfect my will.

PRIESTS

My Lord, they are coming. They will break through presently.
You will be killed. Come to the altar.
Make haste, my Lord. Don't stop here talking. It is not right.
What shall become of us, my Lord, if you are killed ; what shall become of us ?

THOMAS

Peace ! be quiet ! remember where you are, and what is happening ;
No life here is sought for but mine,
And I am not in danger : only near to death.

PRIESTS

My Lord, to vespers ! You must not be absent from vespers. You must not be absent from the divine office. To vespers. Into the cathedral !

THOMAS

Go to vespers, remember me at your prayers.
They shall find the shepherd here ; the flock shall be spared.
I have had a tremour of bliss, a wink of heaven, a whisper,
And I would no longer be denied ; all things
Proceed to a joyful consummation.

PRIESTS

Seize him ! force him ! drag him !

THOMAS

Keep your hands off !

PRIESTS

To vespers ! Hurry.

(*They drag him off. While the Chorus speak, the scene is changed to the cathedral.*)

(*In the cathedral.* THOMAS *and* PRIESTS.)

PRIESTS

Bar the door. Bar the door.
The door is barred.
We are safe. We are safe.
They dare not break in.
They cannot break in. They have not the force.
We are safe. We are safe.

THOMAS

Unbar the doors ! throw open the doors !
I will not have the house of prayer, the church of Christ,
The sanctuary, turned into a fortress.
The Church shall protect her own, in her own way, not
As oak and stone ; stone and oak decay,
Give no stay, but the Church shall endure.
The church shall be open, even to our enemies. Open the door !

PRIESTS

My Lord ! these are not men, these come not as men come, but
Like maddened beasts. They come not like men, who
Respect the sanctuary, who kneel to the Body of Christ,
But like beasts. You would bar the door
Against the lion, the leopard, the wolf or the boar,
Why not more
Against beasts with the souls of damned men, against men
Who would damn themselves to beasts. My Lord ! My Lord !

THOMAS

You think me reckless, desperate and mad.
You argue by results, as this world does,
To settle if an act be good or bad.
You defer to the fact. For every life and every act

Consequence of good and evil can be shown.
And as in time results of many deeds are blended
So good and evil in the end become confounded.
It is not in time that my death shall be known ;
It is out of time that my decision is taken
If you call that decision
To which my whole being gives entire consent.
I give my life
To the Law of God above the Law of Man.
Unbar the door ! unbar the door !
We are not here to triumph by fighting, by stratagem, or by resistance,
Not to fight with beasts as men. We have fought the beast
And have conquered. We have only to conquer
Now, by suffering. This is the easier victory.
Now is the triumph of the Cross, now
Open the door ! I command it. Open the door !

(*While the* KNIGHTS *kill him, we hear the* CHORUS.)

Clear the air ! clean the sky ! wash the wind ! take stone from stone and wash them.
The land is foul, the water is foul, our beasts and ourselves defiled with blood.
A rain of blood has blinded my eyes. Where is England ? where is Kent ? where is Canterbury ?
O far far far in the past ; and I wander in a land of barren boughs : if I break them, they bleed ; I wander in a land of dry stones : if I touch them they bleed.
How how can I ever return, to the soft quiet seasons ?
Night stay with us, stop sun, hold season, let the day not come, let the spring not come.
Can I look again at the day and its common things, and see them all smeared with blood, through a curtain of falling blood ?
We did not wish anything to happen.

We understood the private catastrophe,
The personal loss, the general misery,
Living and partly living;
The terror by night that ends in daily action,
The terror by day that ends in sleep;
But the talk in the market-place, the hand on the broom,
The night-time heaping of the ashes,
The fuel laid on the fire at daybreak,
These acts marked a limit to our suffering.
Every horror had its definition,
Every sorrow had a kind of end:
In life there is not time to grieve long.
But this, this is out of life, this is out of time,
An instant eternity of evil and wrong.
We are soiled by a filth that we cannot clean, united to supernatural vermin,
It is not we alone, it is not the house, it is not the city that is defiled,
But the world that is wholly foul.
Clear the air! clean the sky! wash the wind! take the stone from the stone, take the skin from the arm, take the muscle from the bone, and wash them. Wash the stone, wash the bone, wash the brain, wash the soul, wash them, wash them!

(*The* KNIGHTS, *having completed the murder, advance to the front of the stage and address the audience.*)

T. S. ELIOT: *Murder in the Cathedral.*

7. A.D. 1177.

Fair Rosamond

"Rosamund, concubine to Henry II, poisoned by Queen Elianor, as some thought, dyed at Woodstock, where King Henry had made her a house of wonderfull working; so that no man or woman might come to her, but he that was instructed by the King, or such as were right secret with him touching the matter. This house after some was named Labyrinthus, or Dedalus worke, which was wrought like unto a knot in a garden, called a Maze; but it was commonly said, that lastly the queen came to her by a clue of thridde, or silke, and so dealt with her, that she lived not long after: but when she was dead, she was buried at Godstow, in an house of nunnes beside Oxford."—*Stowe Chron.*

WHEN as King Henry rulde this land,
The second of that name,
Besides the queene, he dearly lovde
A faire and comely dame.

Most peerlesse was her beautye founde,
Her favour, and her face;
A sweeter creature in this worlde
Could never prince embrace.

Her crisped lockes like threads of golde
Appeard to each mans sight;
Her sparkling eyes, like Orient pearles,
Did cast a heavenlye light.

The blood within her crystal cheekes
Did such a colour drive,
As though the lillye and the rose
For mastership did strive.

Yea Rosamonde, fair Rosamonde,
Her name was called so,
To whom our queene, dame Ellinor,
Was known a deadlye foe.

The king therefore, for her defence,
Against the furious queene,
At Woodstocke builded such a bower,
The like was never seene.

Most curiously that bower was built
Of stone and timber strong,
An hundered and fifty doors
Did to this bower belong :

And they so cunninglye contriv'd
With turnings round about,
That none but with a clue of thread,
Could enter in or out.

And for his love and ladyes sake,
That was so faire and brighte,
The keeping of this bower he gave
Unto a valiant knighte.

But fortune, that doth often frowne
Where she before did smile,
The kinges delighte and ladyes joy
Full soon shee did beguile :

For why, the kinges ungracious sonne,
Whom he did high advance,
Against his father raised warres
Within the realme of France.

But yet before our comelye king
The English land forsooke,
Of Rosamond, his lady faire,
His farewelle thus he tooke :

" My Rosamonde, my only Rose,
That pleasest best mine eye :
The fairest flower in all the worlde
To feed my fantasye :

The flower of mine affected heart,
Whose sweetness doth excelle :
My royal Rose, a thousand times
I bid thee nowe farewelle !

For I must leave my fairest flower,
My sweetest Rose, a space,
And cross the seas to famous France,
Proud rebelles to abase.

But yet, my Rose, be sure thou shalt
My coming shortlye see,
And in my heart, when hence I am,
Ile beare my Rose with mee."

When Rosamond, that ladye brighte,
Did heare the king saye soe,
The sorrowe of her grieved heart
Her outward lookes did showe ;

And from her cleare and crystall eyes
The teares gusht out apace,
Which like the silver-pearled dewe
Ranne downe her comely face.

Her lippes, erst like the corall redde,
Did waxe both wan and pale,
And for the sorrow she conceivde
Her vitall spirits faile ;

And falling down all in a swoone
Before King Henryes face,
Full oft he in his princelye armes
Her bodye did embrace :

And twentye times, with watery eyes,
He kist her tender cheeke,
Untill he had revivde againe
Her senses milde and meeke.

Why grieves my Rose, my sweetest Rose ?
The king did often say.
Because, quoth shee, to bloodye warres
My lord must part awaye.

But since your grace on forrayne coastes
Amonge your foes unkinde
Must goe to hazard life and limbe,
Why should I staye behinde ?

Nay rather, let me, like a page,
Your sworde and target beare ;
That on my breast the blowes may lighte,
Which would offend you there.

Or lett mee, in your royal tent,
Prepare your bed at nighte,
And with sweete baths refresh your grace,
At your returne from fighte.

So I your presence may enjoye
No toil I will refuse ;
But wanting you, my life is death ;
Nay, death Ild rather chuse !

" Content thy self, my dearest love ;
Thy rest at home shall bee
In Englandes sweet and pleasant isle ;
For travell fits not thee.

Faire ladies brooke not bloodye warres ;
Soft peace their sexe delightes ;
' Not rugged campes, but courtlye bowers ;
Gay feastes, not cruell fightes.'

My Rose shall safely here abide,
With musicke passe the daye ;
Whilst I, amonge the piercing pikes,
My foes seeke far awaye.

My Rose shall shine in pearle, and golde,
Whilst Ime in armour dighte ;
Gay galliards here my love shall dance,
Whilst I my foes goe fighte.

And you, Sir Thomas, whom I truste
To bee my loves defence ;
Be carefull of my gallant Rose
When I am parted hence."

And therewithall he fetcht a sigh,
As though his heart would breake :
And Rosamonde, for very griefe,
Not one plaine word could speake.

And at their parting well they mighte
In heart be grieved sore :
After that daye faire Rosamonde
The king did see no more.

For when his grace had past the seas,
And into France was gone ;
With envious heart, Queene Ellinor,
To Woodstocke came anone.

And forth she calls this trustye knighte,
In an unhappy houre ;
Who with his clue of twined thread,
Came from this famous bower.

And when that they had wounded him,
The queene this thread did gette,
And went where Ladye Rosamonde
Was like an angell sette.

But when the queene with stedfast eye
Beheld her beauteous face,
She was amazed in her minde
At her exceeding grace.

Cast off from thee those robes, she said,
That riche and costlye bee ;
And drinke thou up this deadlye draught,
Which I have brought to thee.

Then presentlye upon her knees
Sweet Rosamonde did falle ;
And pardon of the queene she crav'd
For her offences all.

" Take pitty on my youthfull yeares,"
Faire Rosamonde did crye ;
" And lett mee not with poison stronge
Enforced bee to dye.

I will renounce my sinfull life,
And in some cloyster bide ;
Or else be banisht, if you please,
To range the world soe wide.

And for the fault which I have done,
Though I was forc'd theretoe,
Preserve my life, and punish mee
As you thinke meet to doe."

And with these words, her lillie handes
She wrunge full often there ;
And downe along her lovely face
Did trickle many a teare.

But nothing could this furious queene
Therewith appeased bee ;
The cup of deadlye poyson stronge,
As she knelt on her knee,

Shee gave this comelye dame to drinke ;
Who tooke it in her hand,
And from her bended knee arose,
And on her feet did stand :

And casting up her eyes to heaven,
Shee did for mercye calle ;
And drinking up the poison stronge,
Her life she lost withalle.

And when that death through everye limbe
  Had showde its greatest spite,
Her chiefest foes did plaine confesse
  Shee was a glorious wight.

Her body then they did entomb,
  When life was fled away,
At Godstowe, neare to Oxford towne,
  As may be seene this day.

ANON.

8. A.D. 1216.

King John

(*Enter* Attendants, *and* BIGOT, *carrying* KING JOHN *in a chair.*)

KING JOHN

Ay, marry, now my soul hath elbow-room ;
It would not out at windows nor at doors.
There is so hot a summer in my bosom,
That all my bowels crumble up to dust :
I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen
Upon a parchment, and against this fire
Do I shrink up.

PRINCE HENRY

How fares your majesty ?

KING JOHN

Poison'd,—ill fare—dead, forsook, cast off :
And none of you will bid the winter come
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw,
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course
Through my burn'd bosom, nor entreat the north
To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips
And comfort me with cold. I do not ask you much,
I beg cold comfort ; and you are so strait
And so ingrateful, you deny me that.

PRINCE HENRY

O that there were some virtue in my tears,
That might relieve you !

KING JOHN

The salt in them is hot.
Within me is a hell ; and there the poison

Is as a fiend confined to tyrannize
On unreprievable condemned blood.

PRINCE HENRY

At Worcester must his body be interr'd ;
For so he will'd it.

BASTARD

Thither shall it then :
And happily may your sweet self put on
The lineal state and glory of the land !
To whom, with all submission, on my knee
I do bequeath my faithful services
And true subjection everlastingly.

SALISBURY

And the like tender of our love we make,
To rest without a spot for evermore.

PRINCE HENRY

I have a kind soul that would give you thanks
And knows not how to do it but with tears.

BASTARD

O, let us pay the time but needful woe,
Since it hath been beforehand with our griefs.
This England never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it first did help to wound itself.
Now these her princes are come home again,
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true.

[*Exeunt.*

SHAKESPEARE : *King John.*

9. A.D. 1283.

In the year after the death of Llewellyn Edward I forced the passes of Snowdon and subdued the whole of Wales, which had revolted in sympathy with Simon de Montfort. The Massacre of the Bards, which is alleged to have followed, is a matter of legend rather than of fact.

"RUIN seize thee, ruthless king!
Confusion on thy banners wait!
Tho' fanned by Conquest's crimson wing
They mock the air with idle state.
Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail,
Nor e'en thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!"
Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride
Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his long array:
Stout Gloster stood aghast in speechless trance;
"To arms!" cried Mortimer, and couched his quivering lance.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
Robed in the sable garb of woe
With haggard eyes the poet stood
(Loose his beard and hoary hair
Streamed like a meteor to the troubled air)
And with a master's hand and prophet's fire
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.

" Hark, how each giant oak and desert cave
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath !
O'er thee, oh King ! their hundred arms they wave,
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe ;
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

" Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hushed the stormy main :
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed :
Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topt head.
On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
Smeared with gore, and ghastly pale :
Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail ;
The famished eagle screams, and passes by.
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
No more I weep. They do not sleep.
On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
I see them sit ; they linger yet,
Avengers of their native land :
With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.

" Weave the warp and weave the woof,
The winding sheet of Edward's race :
Give ample room, and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year and mark the night,
When Severn shall re-echo with affright

The shrieks of death thro' Berkeley's roof that ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing king !
She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of heaven. What terrors round him wait !
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

" Mighty victor, mighty lord !
Low on his funeral couch he lies !
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the sable warrior fled ?
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
The swarm that in thy noontide beam were born ?
Gone to salute the rising morn.
Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes :
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm ;
Regardless of the sleeping Whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

" Fill high the sparkling bowl,
The rich repast prepare,
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast :
Close by the regal chair
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.
Heard ye the din of battle bray,
Lance to lance, and horse to horse ?
Long years of havoc urge their destined course,
And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way.

Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
Revere his Consort's faith, his Father's fame,
And spare the meek Usurper's holy head.
Above, below, the rose of snow,
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread :
The bristled Boar in infant gore
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er the accursed loom,
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

" Edward, lo ! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun).
Half of thy heart we consecrate.
(The web is wove. The work is done.)
Stay, oh stay ! nor thus forlorn
Leave me unblessed, unpitied, here to mourn :
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
But, oh ! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll ?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight !
Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul !
No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.
All hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail !

" Girt with many a baron bold
Sublime their starry fronts they rear ;
And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty, appear.
In the midst a form divine !
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line ;
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
Attempered sweet to virgin-grace.

What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
  What strains of vocal transport round her play ?
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear ;
  They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
Waves in the eye of Heaven her many-coloured wings.

The verse adorn again
  Fierce War, and faithful Love,
And Truth severe, by fairy fiction drest.
  In buskined measures move
Pale Grief and pleasing Pain,
With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
  A voice as of the cherub-choir,
Gales from blooming Eden bear ;
And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
  That lost in long futurity expire.
Fond impious man think'st thou yon sanguine cloud,
  Raised by thy breath, has quenched the orb of day ?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
Enough for me : with joy I see
  The different doom our fates assign :
Be thine Despair, and sceptred Care,
  To triumph and to die are mine."
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night.

THOMAS GRAY : *The Bard.*

10. A.D. 1314.

Scots, Wha Hae

Robert the Bruce addresses his army before the Scottish victory over Edward I.

SCOTS, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led ;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour ;
See the front o' battle lower,
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slaverie !

Wha will be a traitor knave ?
Wha can fill a coward's grave ?
Wha sae base as be a slave ?
Let him turn and flee !

Wha for Scotland's King and law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or free-man fa' ?
Let him follow me !

By oppression's woes and pains !
By your sons in servile chains !
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free !

Lay the proud usurpers low !
Tyrants fall in every foe !
Liberty's in every blow !
Let us do, or die !

ROBERT BURNS.

11. *Circ.* 1388.

The Ballad of Chevy Chase

" I never heard the old song of Percie and Douglas, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet."—SIR PHILIP SYDNEY : *Defence of Poetry*. This is the later (and on the whole the better) version, of the old ballad, " The Hunting a' the Cheviat." Its theme is the rivalry between Earls Percy and Douglas, which is a matter of history ; but the actual fight between them is probably a confusion with another ballad almost equally well known, " The Battle of Otterbourne."

PART I

GOD prosper long our noble King,
Our lives and safeties all !
A woeful hunting once there did
In Chevy Chase befall.

To drive the deer, with hound and horn,
Earl Percy took the way ;
The child may rue, that is unborn,
The hunting of that day.

The stout Earl of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods,
Three summer days to take,

The chiefest harts in Chevy Chase
To kill and bear away.
These tidings to Earl Douglas came
In Scotland, where he lay ;

Who sent Earl Percy present word,
He would prevent his sport.
The English Earl, not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort,

With fifteen hundred bowmen bold,
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well, in time of need,
To aim their shafts aright.

The gallant greyhounds swiftly ran,
To chase the fallow deer.
On Monday they began to hunt,
Ere daylight did appear ;

And long before high noon they had
A hundred fat bucks slain :
Then, having dined, the drovers went
To rouse the deer again.

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
The nimble deer to take,
That with their cries the hills and dales
An echo shrill did make.

Lord Percy to the quarry went,
To view the slaughtered deer,
Quoth he, " Earl Douglas promised
This day to meet me here.

" But if I thought he would not come,
No longer would I stay ! "
With that a brave young gentleman,
Thus to the Earl did say :

" Lo, yonder doth Earl Douglas come !
His men in armour bright !
Full twenty hundred Scottish spears
All marching in our sight !

" All pleasant men of Tividale,
Fast by the river Tweed."
" Oh, cease your sports ! " Earl Percy said,
" And take your bows with speed ;

" And now with me, my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance ;
For there was never champion yet,
In Scotland, nor in France,

That ever did on horseback come ;
And, if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
With him to break a spear ! "

Earl Douglas, on his milk-white steed,
Most like a baron bold,
Rode foremost of his company,
Whose armour shone like gold.

" Show me," said he, " whose men you be
That hunt so boldly here ?
That, without my consent, do chase
And kill my fallow deer."

The first man that did answer make,
Was noble Percy he,
Who said, " We list not to declare,
Nor show, whose men we be :

" Yet we will spend our dearest blood
Thy chiefest harts to slay."
Then Douglas swore a solemn oath,
And thus in rage did say :

" Ere thus I will outbravèd be,
One of us two shall die :
I know thee well ! An earl thou art,
Lord Percy. So am I.

" But, trust me, Percy, pity it were,
And great offence, to kill
Any of these, our guiltless men !
For they have done no ill.

" Let thou and I the battle try ;
And set our men aside."
" Accursed be he," Earl Percy said,
" By whom it is denied ! "

Then stepped a gallant squire forth,
Witherington was his name,
Who said, " I would not have it told
To Henry our King, for shame,

" That e'er my Captain fought on foot,
And I stood looking on.
You be two earls," quoth Witherington,
" And I a squire alone.

" I'll do the best that do I may,
While I have power to stand :
While I have power to wield my sword,
I'll fight with heart and hand."

Our English archers bent their bows,
  Their hearts were good and true.
At the first flight of arrows sent,
  Full fourscore Scots they slew.

" To drive the deer with hound and horn ! "
  Douglas bade on the bent.
Two captains moved, with mickle might,
  Their spears to shivers went.

They closed full fast on every side ;
  No slackness there was found ;
But many a gallant gentleman
  Lay gasping on the ground.

O Christ ! it was a grief to see
  And likewise for to hear,
The cries of men lying in their gore,
  And scattered here and there.

At last, these two stout earls did meet
  Like captains of great might,
Like lions wode, they laid on load,
  And made a cruel fight.

They fought, until they both did sweat,
  With swords of tempered steel,
Till blood adown their cheeks, like rain,
  They trickling down did feel.

" Yield thee, O Percy," Douglas said.
  " In faith ! I will thee bring,
Where thou shalt high advancèd be
  By James, our Scottish King !

" Thy ransom I will freely give !
And this report of thee—
' Thou art the most courageous knight
That ever I did see ! ' "

" No, Douglas," quoth Earl Percy then,
" Thy proffer I do scorn ;
I will not yield to any Scot
That ever yet was born ! "

With that, there came an arrow keen
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Earl Douglas to the heart,
A deep and deadly blow.

Who never said more words than these,
" Fight on, my merry men all !
For why ? My life is at an end,
Lord Percy sees my fall ! "

Then leaving life, Lord Percy took
The dead man by the hand,
Who said, " Earl Douglas, for thy sake,
Would I have lost my land !

" O Christ ! my very heart doth bleed
For sorrow, for thy sake,
For sure, a more redoubted knight
Mischance could never take ! "

A knight, amongst the Scots there was,
Which saw Earl Douglas die ;
Who straight in heart did vow revenge
Upon the Lord Percy.

Part II

Sir Hugh Montgomery was he called ;
  Who, with a spear most bright,
Well mounted on a gallant steed,
  Ran fiercely through the fight.

And passed the English archers all,
  Without or dread or fear ;
And through Earl Percy's body then
  He thrust his hateful spear.

With such a vehement force and might
  He did his body gore :
The staff ran through the other side,
  A large cloth-yard and more.

Thus did both these nobles die,
  Whose courage none could stain ;
An English archer then perceived
  The noble earl was slain.

He had a good bow in his hand
  Made of a trusty tree.
An arrow of a cloth-yard long,
  Up to the head drew he.

Against Sir Hugh Montgomery,
  So right the shaft he set ;
The grey-goose wing that was thereon,
  In his heart's blood was wet.

This fight did last from break of day
  Till setting of the sun :
For when they rang the evening bell,
  The battle scarce was done.

With stout Earl Percy there were slain
Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Radcliffe, and Sir John,
Sir James, that bold Baron.

And with Sir George and stout Sir James,
Both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Raby there was slain,
Whose prowess did surmount.

For Witherington needs must I wail,
As one in doleful dumps,
For when his legs were smitten off,
He fought upon his stumps.

And with Earl Douglas there were slain
Sir Hugh Montgomery;
And Sir Charles Murray, that from field
One foot would never flee.

Sir Charles Murray of Ratcliffe, too
His sister's son was he:
Sir David Lamb, so well esteemed,
But saved he could not be.

And the Lord Maxwell, in like case,
Did with Earl Douglas die.
Of twenty hundred Scottish spears
Scarce fifty-five did fly.

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen,
Went home but fifty-three;
The rest on Chevy Chase were slain,
Under the greenwood tree.

Next day did many widows come
  Their husbands to bewail:
They washed their wounds with brinish tears;
  But all would not prevail.

Their bodies, bathed in purple blood,
  They bore with them away.
They kissed them, dead, a thousand times,
  Ere they were clad in clay.

The news was brought to Edinborough,
  Where Scotland's King did reign,
That brave Earl Douglas suddenly
  Was with an arrow slain.

"Oh, heavy news!" King James did say,
  "Scotland may witness be,
I have not any captain more
  Of such account as he!"

Like tidings to King Henry came,
  Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
  Was slain in Chevy Chase.

"Now, God be with him!" said our King,
  "Sith it will better be;
I trust I have, within my realm,
  Five hundred as good as he!

"Yet shall not Scots, nor Scotland, say
  But I will vengeance take;
And be revengèd on them all,
  For brave Earl Percy's sake."

This vow the King did well perform
After, on Humbledown,
In one day fifty knights were slain,
With lords of great renown.

And of the rest, of small account,
Did many thousands die.
Thus endeth the hunting in Chevy Chase,
Here by the Earl Percy.

God save our King, and bless this land
With plenty, joy, and peace!
And grant, henceforth, that foul debate
'Twixt noble men may cease!

ANON.

12. A.D. 1399.

" Will the King come, that I may breathe my last
In wholesome counsel to his unstaid youth ? "—It is of Richard II that the dying Gaunt is speaking.

GAUNT

Methinks I am a prophet new inspired
And thus expiring do foretell of him :
His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,
For violent fires soon burn out themselves ;
Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short ;
He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes ;
With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder :
Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,
Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.
This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,

As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son ;
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leased out, I die pronouncing it,
Like to a tenement or pelting farm :
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds :
That England, that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.
Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life
How happy then were my ensuing death !

SHAKESPEARE : *King Richard the Second.*

13. A.D. 1415.

Agincourt

FAIR stood the wind for France,
When we our sails advance,
Not now to prove our chance
Longer will tarry ;
And putting to the main,
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train
Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,
Furnished in warlike sort,
Marcheth t'wards Agincourt
In happy hour ;
Skirmishing day by day
With those that stopped his way
Where the French gen'ral lay
With all his power.

Which in his height of pride,
King Henry to deride,
His ransom to provide,
To the King sending ;
Which he neglects the while,
As from a nation vile,
Yet with an angry smile,
Their fall portending.

And turning to his men,
Quoth our brave Henry then,
" Though they be one to ten
Be not amazèd.
Yet have we well begun,
Battles so bravely won,
Have ever to the sun,
By Fame been raisèd.

" And for myself (quoth he)
This my full rest shall be,
England ne'er mourn for me,
Nor more esteem me ;
Victor I will remain,
Or on this earth lie slain,
Never shall she sustain
Loss to redeem me."

Poictiers and Cressy tell,
When most their pride did swell,
Under our swords they fell :
No less our skill is.
Then when our Grandsire great,
Claiming the regal seat,
By many a warlike feat
Lopped the French lilies.

The Duke of York so dread
The eager vanguard led ;
With the main Henry sped,
Among his henchmen ;
Exeter had the rear,
A braver man not there,
O Lord, how hot they were
On the false Frenchmen !

They now to fight are gone,
Armour on armour shone,
Drum now to drum did groan,
  To hear was wonder ;
That with the cries they make,
The very earth did shake,
Trumpet to trumpet spake,
  Thunder to thunder.

Well it thine age became,
O noble Erpingham,
Which didst the signal aim
  To our hid forces ;
When from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly,
The English archery
  Stuck the French horses.

With Spanish yew so strong,
Arrows a cloth-yard long,
That like to serpents stung,
  Piercing the weather ;
None from his fellow starts,
But playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts,
  Stuck close together.

When down their bows they threw,
And forth their bilbows drew,
And on the French they flew,—
  Not one was tardy ;
Arms were from shoulders sent,
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
Down the French peasants went,—
  Our men were hardy.

This while our noble King,
His broad sword brandishing,
Down the French host did ding
  As to o'erwhelm it ;
And many a deep wound lent,
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent
  Bruised his helmet.

Glou'ster, that Duke so good,
Next to the royal blood,
For famous England stood,
  With his brave brother ;
Clarence, in steel so bright,
Though but a maiden knight,
Yet in that furious fight
  Scarce such another.

Warwick in blood did wade,
Oxford the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made,
  Still as they ran up ;
Suffolk his axe did ply,
Beaumont and Willoughby,
Bare them right doughtily,
  Ferrers and Fanhope.

Upon Saint Crispin's Day
Fought was this noble fray,
Which fame shall not delay
  To England to carry ;
Oh when shall Englishmen
With such acts fill a pen,
Or England breed again
  Such a King Harry ?

MICHAEL DRAYTON : *Agincourt.*

14. A.D. 1415.

(1)

France. Before Harfleur.

(*Alarums. Enter* KING HENRY, EXETER, BEDFORD, GLOUCESTER, *and* Soldiers, *with scaling ladders.*)

KING HENRY

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more ;
Or close the wall up with our English dead !
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility :
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger ;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage ;
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect ;
Let it pry through the portage of the head
Like the brass cannon ; let the brow o'erwhelm it
As fearfully as doth a galled rock
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.
Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To his full height ! On, on, you noblest English !
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof ;
Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,
Have in these parts from morn till even fought,
And sheath'd their swords for lack of argument.

Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture ; let us swear
That you are worth your breeding ; which I doubt not ;
For there is none of you so mean and base
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot :
Follow your spirit ; and, upon this charge
Cry " God for Harry ! England, and Saint George ! "
[*Exeunt.*]

SHAKESPEARE : *King Henry the Fifth.*

(2)

The English Camp.

(*Enter* KING HENRY)

WESTMORELAND

O ! that we now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do no work to-day.

KING HENRY

What's he that wishes so ?
My cousin Westmoreland ? No, my fair cousin :
If we are mark'd to die, we are enow
To do our country loss ; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
God's will ! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost ;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear ;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires :
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England :
God's peace ! I would not lose so great an honour
As one man more, methinks, would share from me,
For the best hope I have. O ! do not wish one more :
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,

Let him depart ; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse :
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is call'd the feast of Crispian :
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam'd,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say, " To-morrow is Saint Crispian " :
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say, " These wounds I had on Crispin's day."
Old men forget : yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.
This story shall the good man teach his son ;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered ;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers ;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother ; be he ne'er so vile
This day shall gentle his condition :
And gentlemen in England, now a-bed
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

SHAKESPEARE : *King Henry the Fifth.*

16.

The Coming of the Franciscans to England

BAREFOOT and laughing, two by two,
Forth by the mountains and the sea,
To sup on England's bitter brew,
Came those gray gowns from Italy.
And this was all they had to teach :
Thrice blessed is Saint Poverty ;
As poor, yet making many rich,
As having nought, possessing all.
Stitchless, to folk without a stitch
They sang this life a madrigal ;
And why our Lady chose an inn,
And bare her Son in oxen-stall
(Because her kingdom was within
As ours is too if we would choose it) ;
And why Christ died—to drive this in,
Whoso would save his life must lose it.
So to poor Hodge the broken serf,
So to the outlaw, so to the stews, it
Flies fast and far, as o'er the turf
Cloud-shadows and the sun hold chace.
Even he who, gnawed by silver scurf,
Gropes for his way without a face,
The leper of the clacking boards
Warms to the gospel full of grace
That calls him brother of his lords
(Since God was made a poor girl's child).
Within his fretted flesh he hoards

The message from the Undefiled,
And bears his loathsome burden yet
A little longer, reconciled.
Broadcast is flung this holy net
That knits up all men in a band
Of common right and common debt
In what all men may understand.
They sing the gods denied to no man,
Whether he till or hold the land ;
Whether of Sarum use or Roman
The Church, these two her altar knows,
The One a child, the other Woman.

MAURICE HEWLETT : *Song of the Plow.*

17. A.D. 1380.

Piers Plowman, the common man, the "Hodge" of Maurice Hewlett's *Song of the Plow*, as he lies dreaming on the Malvern Hills, sees a vision of "The Field Full of Folk": i.e. a comprehensive picture of England between 1350 and 1400.

(1)

IN a summer season, when soft was the sun,
In rough cloth I robed me, as I a shepherd were,
In habit like a hermit in his works unholy,
And through the wide world I went, wonders to hear.

But on a May morning, on Malvern hills,
A marvel befel me —sure from Faery it came—
I had wandered me weary, so weary, I rested me
On a broad bank by a merry-sounding burn;
And as I lay and leaned and looked into the waters
I slumbered in a sleeping, it rippled so merrily,
And I dreamed—marvellously.

All the worlds weal, all the worlds woe,
Truth and trickery, treason and guile,
All I saw, sleeping.

I was in a wilderness, wist I not where,
And eastward I looked against the sun.
I saw a Tower on an hill, fairly fashioned,
Beneath it a Dell, and in the Dell a dungeon,
With deep ditches and dark and dreadful to see,
And Death and wicked spirits dwelt therein,
And all between, between the Hill and Dungeon,

A FAIR FIELD FULL OF FOLK

Rich and poor, all manner of men,
Working and wandering as in the world we must.

Some were for ploughing, and played full seldom,
Set their seed and sowed their seed, and sweated hard,
To win what wastrels with gluttony destroy.

Some were for pride, in parade of apparel.

Some were for prayers and penance, ay, many a one,
Living strait lives for love of our Lord
In hope of heavenly bliss,
Anchorites, hermits, that held in their cells,
And coveted not to roam the country side and beg,
Nor with dainty living their body to please.

Some chose merchandise ; they throve the best.

And some were for music, the music of minstrels,
Gold getting, gleeful in an innocent heart.

But jesters and janglers, Judas children,
Feigning their fancies, and fooling the crowds,
With wit enough to work, if work they would,
Paul preacheth about them —no more will I say—
He that speaketh filthily is the Devils man.

* * *

Friars ? All the four orders, I found them there,
Preaching to the people, and glosing the gospel
For their own profit.

Many of these masters may dress as they will,
Money and their preaching soon meet one another.

Gods love has turned trader, and the rich pay high,
And we in few years have seen wonderful things.
If Gods love and the Church do not cut down such Friars,
The greatest mischief in the world will mount up full fast.

Look there, a Pardoner, preaching like a priest,
A papal bull he brought, sealed by the bishop,
He can assoil them all, of fasting, falsehood, and of broken vows.

The simple fools believed him, loved his words,
Came and knelt and kissed his bull,
He bunched his " letters " in their faces and blinded their eyes,
And his parchment roll robbed them of rings and brooches.
Thus, men, ye give your gold to keep gluttons going,
And lend it to loafers that follow lechery.

If the bishop were holy and worth both his ears,
He would not send his seal to deceive the people,
But against the bishop your Pardoner preaches not,
For the parson and the Pardoner share the sermon-silver,
Which the parish poor would get if the Pardoner were away.

* * *

Then bent an angel down, and spake for the poors sake,
Who cannot jangle in the courts and plead their cause aright,
But they must serve and suffer, for their sakes he said it,
He spake to the clergy and the king.

"King and a Prince art thou,
"To-morrow nothing;
"Thou that of Christ the King
"Dost keep the way,
"Be just, show mercy,
"And carry out His will.
"Mercy is justice still,
"Sow and reap mercy."

Then rose a buffoon, a glutton of words
If the King keep not the Law
He is the name—but not the thing.

* * *

And all the people cried to the Council in Latin
The precepts of the King
These be our bond of Law.

* * *

There wandered a hundred, in hoods of silk,
Serjeants they seemed, and served at the Bar,
Pleading the Law, for pennies and for pounds,
Unlocking their lips never for love of our Lord.
Thou mightest better mete the mist on Malvern hills
Than get a mutter from their mouths—save thou show thy money.
I saw bold bishops and bachelors of divinity
Made clerks of accounts to serve the king,
Deacons and archdeacons, men full of dignity,
Who should preach to the people and feed the poor,
They leapt away to London (their bishops gave them leave)
To be clerks of the King's Bench and to despoil the land.

* * *

(2)

I bowed my body, beholding all about me,
Saw sun and sea, and the sand of the shore,
Where birds and beasts with their mates wandered,
Wild serpents in the woods and wonderful birds,
Flecked with many a coloured feather ;
Man and his mate, Peace and War,
Poverty and plenty, bliss and bitter bale ;
And I saw all beasts following Reason,
In eating and drinking and gendering their kind ;
Man and his mate alone were Reason-less.
Birds I beheld making nests in the bushes,
I wondered from whom and where the pie learnt
To lay the sticks that lie in her nest,
Hiding and covering that no fool should find ;
In marshes on moors in mire and in water
Divers dived. " Dear God," said I,
" Where gat these wild things wit ? "
But that which most moved
me changing my mood,
Was that I saw all beasts following Reason,
Save man and mankind ;
" Wherefore," said I, " so widely thou reignest
" Dost thou not rule man and his mate ?
" None surfeit as he does and keep not measure,
" In meat and in drink, in dress and in women,
" They over do it day and night and only they—none other."
But Reason reasoned me ; " Reck thou never
" Why I suffer or suffer not.
" Who suffereth more than
God ? " " No man, by my life,
" He might amend in a
minute all that is amiss,
" But He suffereth to show us that we should all suffer."

PIERS PLOWMAN.

18. CIRC. 1385.

Prologue to The Canterbury Tales

Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury.

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures sote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open ye,
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

The Yeoman

A Yeman hadde he, and servaunts na-mo
At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;
And he was clad in cote and hodd of grene;
A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene

Under his belt he bar ful thriftily,
(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly :
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage.
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other syde a gay daggere
Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere ;
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene ;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

The Prioress

Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioresse,
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy ;
Hir gretteste ooth was but by seynt Loy ;
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
Ful wel she song the service divyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely ;
And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle ;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle.
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,

And sikerly she was of greet desport,
And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,
And peyned hir to countrefete chere
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But, for to speken of hir conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.
But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte :
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was ;
Hir nose tretys ; hir eyen greye as glas ;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed ;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed ;
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe ;
For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene ;
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*

The Pardoner

With him ther rood a gentil Pardoner
Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer,
That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
Ful loude he song, " Com hider, love, to me."
This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.

This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,
But smothe it heng, as dooth a stryke of flex ;
By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde ;
But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon ;
But hood, for Iolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet.
Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe Iet ;
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.
His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardon come from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave ;
I trowe his cheke and eek his chin were bare.
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl :
He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That seynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til Iesu Crist him hente.
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus, with feyned flaterye and Iapes,
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.

Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertorie ;
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude ;
Therefore he song so merily and loude.

GLOSSARY

l. 1. sote = sweet.
l. 11. priketh = urges. corages = heart.
l. 14. ferne halwes = ancient shrines.
l. 19. na-mo = no more.
l. 20. for it pleased him to ride thus.
l. 24. takel = weapons.
l. 27. not-heed = head closely cropped.
l. 29. bracer = guard to protect the arm in shooting.
l. 43. scole = school.
l. 50. ful muche = very much. hir leste = her pleasure.
l. 52. ferthing = spot.
l. 54. raughte = reached.
l. 55. sikerly = indeed. desport = jollity.
ll. 57–8. " and she took pains to imitate courtly behaviour and a stately manner."
l. 63. " if it were dead or bleeding."
l. 67. yerde = stick. smerte = hard.
l. 69. tretys = long and well-shaped.
l. 74. hardily = certainly.
l. 75. fetis = well-made. war = aware.
l. 85. a stiff burdoun = a strong bass accompaniment.
l. 86. trompe = trumpet.
l. 91. by colpons = in thin separate strands.
l. 94. of the newe Iet = in the newest fashion.
l. 97. vernicle = a little picture of Christ.
l. 106. male = bag. pilwe-beer = pillow-case.
l. 108. " he said he had a piece of the sail, etc."
l. 111. latoun = a composite metal.
l. 124. affyle = make smooth.

19. A.D. 1381.

Wat Tyler's Song

"WHEN Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman ?"

Wretched is the infant's lot,
Born within the straw-roof'd cot ;
Be he generous, wise, or brave,
He must only be a slave.
Long, long labour, little rest,
Still to toil to be oppressed ;
Drain'd by taxes of his store,
Punished next for being poor :
This is the poor wretch's lot,
Born within the straw-roof'd cot.

While the peasant works,—to sleep,
What the peasant sows,—to reap,
On the couch of ease to lie,
Rioting in revelry ;
Be he villain, be he fool,
Still to hold despotic rule,
Trampling on his slaves with scorn !
This is to be nobly born.

" When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman ?"

R. Southey.

IV

TUDOR

20. A.D. 1513.

Incited by the Queen of France, James IV of Scotland invaded England. He reached the Border some twelve miles west of Berwick and encamped on Flodden hill. There he was met by the Earl of Surrey at the head of an English army. Flodden is a long ridge overlooking the River Till, a position of great natural advantage ; but on the following morning Surrey marched his men down the left bank of the river and crossed at Twisel Bridge almost at the point where the Till joins the Tweed. Why James offered no opposition to the crossing is one of the puzzles of history ; but he did not, and Surrey's troops were allowed to take the Scottish army in the rear. The result of the battle was a complete and crushing victory for the English, in which King James himself was killed.

EVEN so it was. From Flodden ridge
The Scots beheld the English host
Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,
And heedful watch'd them as they cross'd
The Till by Twisel Bridge.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden ! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile ?
What checks the fiery soul of James ?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead ?
What 'vails the vain knight-errant's brand ?
O, Douglas, for thy leading wand !

Fierce Randolph, for thy speed !
O for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skill'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
And cry " Saint Andrew and our right ! "
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne !
The precious hour has pass'd in vain,
And England's host has gain'd the plain ;
Wheeling their march, and circling still,
Around the base of Flodden hill.

" But see ! look up—on Flodden bent
The Scottish foe has fired his tent."
And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreath'd in sable smoke.
Volum'd and fast, and rolling far,
The cloud envelop'd Scotland's war,
As down the hill they broke ;
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announc'd their march ; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.
Scarce could they hear, or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust ;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air ;

O life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
  And triumph and despair.
Long look'd the anxious squires; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

By this though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their King,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vaward wing,
  Where Huntly, and where Home?—
O, for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
  That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
  On Roncesvalles died!
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
  While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
  Our Caledonian pride!

SIR WALTER SCOTT: *Marmion.*

A.D. 21. 1529.

However much, or however little, of *King Henry VIII* may be by Shakespeare's own hand, there can be no doubt as to the authenticity of the scene in which Wolsey learns that the King has turned against him and he has been stripped of all his offices of State. Cromwell is the cardinal's confidential servant.

WOLSEY

So, farewell to the little good you bear me.
Farewell! a long farewell to all my greatness!
This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;
And,—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening,—nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventur'd,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
This many summers in a sea of glory;
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride
At length br[illegible] under me; and now has left me,
Weary and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye!
I feel my heart new open'd. O, how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspéct of princes, and their ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars or women have;
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again.—

(*Enter* CROMWELL)

Why, how now, Cromwell!

CROMWELL

I have no power to speak, sir.

WOLSEY

What, amaz'd
At my misfortunes? can thy spirit wonder
A great man should decline? Nay, an you weep,
I am fall'n indeed.

CROMWELL

How does your grace?

WOLSEY

Why, well;
Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.
I know myself now, and I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience. The king has cur'd me;
I humbly thank his grace; and from these shoulders,
These ruin'd pillars, out of pity, taken
A load would sink a navy—too much honour:
O, 't is a burden, Cromwell, 't is a burden,
Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven!

CROMWELL

O my lord,
Must I then leave you? must I needs forego
So good, so noble, and so true a master?
Bear witness, all that have not hearts of iron,
With what a sorrow Cromwell leaves his lord.—
The king shall have my service, but my prayers
For ever and for ever shall be yours.

WOLSEY

Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear
In all my miseries; but thou hast forc'd me,
Out of thy honest truth, to play the woman.

Let's dry our eyes: and thus far hear me, Cromwell;
And,—when I am forgotten, as I shall be,
And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention
Of me more must be heard of,—say, I taught thee,
Say, Wolsey,—that once trod the ways of glory,
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,—
Found thee a way, out of his wreck, to rise in;
A sure and safe one, though thy master miss'd it.
Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me.
Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition;
By that sin fell the angels; how can man, then,
The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?
Love thyself last: cherish those hearts that hate thee;
Corruption wins not more than honesty.
Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
To silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not:
Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
Thy God's, and Truth's; then if thou fall'st, O Cromwell,
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr! Serve the king;
And,—pr'ythee, lead me in:
There take an inventory of all I have;
To the last penny, 't is the king's: my robe,
And my integrity to heaven, is all
I dare now call mine own. O Cromwell, Cromwell!
Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal
I serv'd my king, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

CROMWELL

Good sir, have patience.

WOLSEY

So I have. Farewell
The hopes of court! my hopes in heaven do dwell.

[*Exeunt*

22. A.D. 1533.

Cranmer's Prophecy over the Infant Elizabeth

SCENE: *The palace*

(*Enter trumpets, sounding; then two* Aldermen, Lord Mayor, Garter, CRANMER, DUKE OF NORFOLK *with his marshal's staff*, DUKE OF SUFFOLK, *two* Noblemen *bearing great standing-bowls for the christening gifts; then four* Noblemen, *bearing a canopy, under which the* DUCHESS OF NORFOLK, *godmother, bearing the child richly habited in a mantle, etc. Train borne by a* Lady; *then follow the* MARCHIONESS OF DORSET, *the other godmother, and* Ladies. *The troop pass once about the stage, and* Garter *speaks.*)

GARTER

Heaven, from Thy endless goodness, send prosperous life, long, and ever happy, to the high and mighty princess of England, Elizabeth!

(*Flourish. Enter* KING, *and train*)

CRANMER (*Kneeling*)

And to your royal grace and the good queen,
My noble partners, and myself, thus pray;—
All comfort, joy, in this most gracious lady,
Heaven ever laid up to make parents happy,
May hourly fall upon ye!

KING HENRY

Thank you, good lord archbishop;
What is her name?

CRANMER

Elizabeth.

KING HENRY

Stand up, lord.—

(*The King kisses the child*)

With this kiss take my blessing : God protect thee !
Into whose hand I give thy life.

CRANMER

Amen.

KING HENRY

My noble gossips, ye have been too prodigal :
I thank ye heartily ; so shall this lady,
When she has so much English.

CRANMER

Let me speak, sir,
For heaven now bids me ; and the words I utter
Let none think flattery, for they'll find them truth.
This royal infant, (heaven still move about her !)
Though in her cradle, yet now promises
Upon this land a thousand thousand blessings,
Which time shall bring to ripeness : she shall be
(But few now living can behold that goodness),
A pattern to all princes living with her,
And all that shall succeed : Saba was never
More covetous of wisdom and fair virtue
Than this pure soul shall be : all princely graces,
That mould up such a mighty piece as this is,
With all the virtues that attend the good,
Shall still be doubled on her : truth shall nurse her,
Holy and heavenly thoughts still counsel her :
She shall be lov'd and fear'd : her own shall bless her ;
Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,
And hang their heads with sorrow : good grows with her :

In her days every man shall eat in safety,
Under his own vine, what he plants ; and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours :
God shall be truly known ; and those about her
From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,
And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.
Nor shall this peace sleep with her : but as when
The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phœnix,
Her ashes new create another heir,
As great in admiration as herself,
So shall she leave her blessedness to one,
(When heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness),
Who from the sacred ashes of her honour
Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was,
And so stand fix'd : peace, plenty, love, truth, terror,
That were the servants to this chosen infant,
Shall then be his, and like a vine grow to him ;
Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine,
His honour and the greatness of his name
Shall be, and make new nations : he shall flourish,
And, like a mountain cedar, reach his branches
To all the plains about him :—our children's children
Shall see this, and bless heaven.

KING HENRY

Thou speakest wonders.

CRANMER

She shall be, to the happiness of England,
An aged princess ; many days shall see her,
And yet no day without a deed to crown it.
Would I had known no more ! but she must die,—
She must, the saints must have her ; yet a virgin,
A most unspotted lily shall she pass
To the ground, and all the world shall mourn her.

KING HENRY

O lord archbishop,
Thou hast made me now a man ! never, before
This happy child, did I get anything :
This oracle of comfort has so pleas'd me,
That when I am in heaven I shall desire
To see what this child does, and praise my Maker.—
I thank ye all.—To you, my good lord mayor,
And your good brethren, I am much beholden ;
I have receiv'd much honour by your presence,
And ye shall find me thankful. Lead the way, lords ;—
Ye must all see the queen, and she must thank ye,
She will be sick else. This day, no man think
Has business at his house ; for all shall stay :
This little one shall make it holiday.

[*Exeunt*

SHAKESPEARE : *King Henry the Eighth.*

23. A.D. 1555.

"Queen Elizabeth's Verses, while prisoner at Woodstock, writ with charcoal upon a shutter."

OH, Fortune! how thy restlesse wavering state
Hath fraught with cares my troubled witt!
Witnes this present prisonn, wither fate
Could beare me, and the joys I quit.
Thus causedst the guiltie to be losed
From bandes, wherein are innocents inclosed:
Causing the guiltles to be straite reserved.
And freeing those that death hath well deserved.
But by her envie can be nothing wroughte,
So God send to my foes all they have thoughte.

ELIZABETHE, PRISONNER.

24. A.D. 1501.

Extract from the complimentary poem recited at the Lord Mayor's Banquet to the embassy from the court of King James IV of Scotland which came to London to negotiate for the hand of Margaret Tudor. Dunbar, Friar and Courtier, was member of the delegation and recognized "poet of the party." The rest of the poem is largely conventional adulation of the very ordinary person who happened to be Lord Mayor of London at the time.

LONDON, thou art of townes "A per se."
Soveraign of cities, seemliest in sight,
Of high renoun, riches, and royaltie,
Of lordis, barons, and many a goodly knyght;
Of most delectable lusty ladies bright;
Of famous prelatis, in habitis clericall;
Of merchauntis full of substaunce and of myght:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Gemme of all joy, jasper of jocunditie,
Most myghty carbuncle of vertue and valour;
Strong Troy in vigour and in strenuytie;
Of royall cities rose and geraflour;
Empress of townes, exalt in honour;
In beawtie beryng the crone imperiall;
Swete paradise precelling in pleasure;
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Above all ryvers thy Ryver hath renowne,
Whose beryall stremys, pleasant and preclare,
Under thy lusty wallys renneth down,
Where many a swan doth swymme with wyngis fair;
Where many a barge doth saile and row with ore;
Where many a ship doth rest with top-royall.
O towne of townes! patrone and not compare,
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

WILLIAM DUNBAR: *In Honour of the City of London.*

V

ELIZABETHAN

The Armada

25. A.D. 1588

The Armada

ATTEND, all ye who list to hear our noble England's praise ;
I tell of the thrice-famous deeds she wrought in ancient days
When that great fleet invincible against her bore in vain
The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts of Spain.

It was about the lovely close of a warm summer day,
There came a gallant merchant-ship full sail to Plymouth Bay;
Her crew had seen Castile's black fleet, beyond Aurigny's Isle,
At earliest twilight, on the waves lie heaving many a mile.
At sunrise she escaped their van, by God's especial grace :
And the tall Pinta, till the noon, had held her close in chase.
Forthwith a guard at every gun was placed along the wall ;
The beacon blazed upon the roof of Edgecumbe's lofty hall ;
Many a light fishing bark put out to pry along the coast,
And with loose rein and bloody spur rode inland many a post.
With his white hair unbonneted, the stout old sheriff comes ;
Behind him march the halberdiers ; before him sound the drums ;
His yeomen round the market cross make clear an ample space ;
For there behoves him to set up the standard of Her Grace.

And haughtily the trumpets peal and gaily dance the bells,
As slow upon the labouring wind the royal blazon swells.

Look how the Lion of the sea lifts up his ancient crown,
And underneath his deadly paw treads the gay lilies down.
So stalked he when he turned to flight, on that famed Picard field,
Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow, and Caesar's eagle shield.
So glared he when at Agincourt in wrath he turned to bay,
And crushed and torn beneath his claws the princely hunters lay.

Ho! strike the flagstaff deep, Sir Knight: ho! scatter flowers, fair maids:
Ho! gunners, fire a loud salute: ho! gallants, draw your blades:
Thou sun, shine on her joyously; ye breezes, waft her wide;
Our glorious SEMPER EADEM, the banner of our pride.
The freshening breeze of eve unfurled that banner's massy fold;
The parting gleam of sunshine kissed that haughty scroll of gold;
Night sank upon the dusky beach, and on the purple sea,
Such night in England ne'er had been, nor e'er again shall be.
From Eddystone to Berwick bounds, from Lynn to Milford Bay,
That time of slumber was as bright and busy as the day;
For swift to east and swift to west the ghastly war-flame spread,
High on St. Michael's Mount it shone; it shone on Beachy Head.
Far on the deep the Spaniards saw, along each southern shire,
Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twinkling points of fire.

The fisher left his skiff to rock on Tamar's glittering waves :
The rugged miners poured to war from Mendip's sunless caves :
O'er Longleat's towers, o'er Cranbourne's oaks, the fiery herald flew :
He roused the shepherds of Stonehenge, the rangers of Beaulieu.

Right sharp and quick the bells all night rang out from Bristol town,
And ere the day three hundred horse had met on Clifton Down ;
The sentinel on Whitehall gate looked forth into the night,
And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill the streak of blood-red light ;
Then bugle's note and cannon's roar the death-like silence broke,
And with one start and with one cry, the royal city woke.
At once on all her stately gates arose the answering fires ;
At once the wild alarum clashed from all her reeling spires ;
From all the batteries of the Tower pealed loud the voice of fear ;
And all the thousand masts of Thames sent back a louder cheer ;
And from the furthest wards was heard the rush of hurrying feet,
And the broad streams of pikes and flags rushed down each roaring street ;
And broader still became the blaze, and louder still the din,
As fast from every village round the horse came spurring in :
And eastward straight from wild Blackheath the warlike errand went,
And roused in many an ancient hall the gallant squires of Kent.

Southward from Surrey's pleasant hills flew those bright couriers forth;
High on bleak Hampstead's swarthy moor they started for the north;
And on, and on, without a pause, untired they bounded still:
All night from tower to tower they sprang: they sprang from hill to hill:
Till the proud Peak unfurled the flag o'er Darwin's rocky dales,
Till like volcanoes flared to heaven the stormy hills of Wales.
Till twelve fair counties saw the blaze on Malvern's lonely height,
Till streamed in crimson on the wind the Wrekin's crest of light,
Till broad and fierce the star came forth on Ely's stately fane,
And tower and hamlet rose in arms o'er all the boundless plain;
Till Belvoir's lordly terraces the sign to Lincoln sent,
And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide vale of Trent;
Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's embattled pile,
And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers of Carlisle.

LORD MACAULAY.

26. A.D. 1591.

A Ballad of the Fleet

I

AT Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away :
" Spanish ships of war at sea ! we have sighted fifty-three ! "
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard : " 'Fore God I am no coward ;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line ; can we fight with fifty-three ? "

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville : " I know you are no coward ;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven ;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below ;

For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
" Shall we fight or shall we fly ?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die !
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again : " We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet."

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below ;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd

By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself and went
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.

Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

X

For he said "Fight on! fight on!"
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said "Fight on! fight on!"

XI

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;

And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark
and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was
all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
" We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in
twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!"

XII

And the gunner said " Ay, ay," but the seamen made reply:
" We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives,
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at
last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign
grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
" I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and
true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:

With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die ! "
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few ;
Was he devil or man ? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own ;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON : *The Revenge.*

27. A.D. 1596.

Drake's Drum

DRAKE he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' rüled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?)
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
" Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low ;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?)
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.

Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
  Call him when ye sail to meet the foe ;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'
  They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found him
    long ago.

HENRY NEWBOLT.

28. A.D. 1594.

To Queen Elizabeth : A Farewell to Arms

HIS golden locks Time hath to silver turn'd ;
O Time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing !
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurn'd,
But spurn'd in vain ; youth waneth by increasing :
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen ;
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees ;
And, lovers' sonnets turn'd to holy psalms,
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
And feed on prayers, which are Age his alms :
But though from court to cottage he depart,
His Saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song,—
" Blest be the hearts that wish my sovereign well,
Curst be the souls that think her any wrong."
Goddess, allow this agèd man his right
To be your beadsman now that was your knight.

GEORGE PEELE : *Polyhymnia.*

29. A.D. 1596.

Marriage-song; in honour of the double wedding of the two daughters of the Earl of Worcester.

At length they all to merry London came,
To merry London, my most kindly nurse,
That to me gave this life's first native source,
Though from another place I take my name,
An house of ancient fame:
There when they came whereas those bricky towers
The which on Thames' broad agéd back do ride,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
There whilome wont the Templar-knights to bide,
Till they decay'd through pride;
Next whereunto there stands a stately place,
Where oft I gainéd gifts and goodly grace
Of that great lord, which therein wont to dwell,
Whose want too well now feels my friendless case;
But ah! here fits not well
Old woes, but joys to tell
Against the bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble peer,
Great England's glory and the world's wide wonder,
Whose dreadful name late through all Spain did thunder,
And Hercules' two pillars standing near
Did make to quake and fear:
Fair branch of honour, flower of chivalry!
That fillest England with thy triumphs' fame
Joy have thou of thy noble victory,

And endless happiness of thine own name
That promiseth the same ;
That through thy prowess and victorious arms
Thy country may be freed from foreign harms,
And great Elisa's glorious name may ring
Through all the world, fill'd with thy wide alarms,
Which some brave Muse may sing
To ages following :
Upon the bridal day, which is not long :
Sweet Thames ! run softly, till I end my song.

From those high towers this noble lord issúing
Like radiant Hesper, when his golden hair
In th' ocean billows he hath bathéd fair,
Descended to the river's open viewing
With a great train ensuing.
Above the rest were goodly to be seen
Two gentle knights of lovely face and feature,
Beseeming well the bower of any queen,
With gifts of wit and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature,
That like the twins of Jove they seem'd in sight
Which deck the baldric of the Heavens bright ;
They two, forth pacing to the river's side,
Received those two fair brides, their love's delight ;
Which, at th' appointed tide,
Each one did make his bride
Against their bridal day, which is not long :
Sweet Thames ! run softly, till I end my song.

EDMUND SPENSER : *Prothalamion.*

30. A.D. 1618.

Lines written by Sir Walter Raleigh in the Gatehouse Prison at Westminster just before his execution, October 29, 1618.

EVEN such is time, that takes on trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days!
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
The Lord shall raise me up, I trust!

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

31. A.D. 1622.

(1)

Warwickshire Country-side

MY native Country then, which so brave spirits hast bred,
If there be virtue yet remaining in thy earth,
Or any good of thine thou breath'd'st into my birth,
Accept it as thine own whilst now I sing of thee ;
Of all thy later Brood th'unworthiest though I be.
Muse, first of Arden tell, whose footsteps yet are found
In her rough wood-lands more than any other ground
That mighty Arden held even in her height of pride ;
Her one hand touching Trent, the other Severne's side.
The very sound of these, the Wood-Nymphs doth awake :
When thus of her ownself the ancient Forest spake :
My many goodly sites when first I came to show,
Here opened I the way to mine own overthrow :
For, when the world found out the fitness of my soil,
The gripple wretch began immediately to spoil
My tall and goodly woods, and did my grounds inclose :
By which, in little time my bounds I came to lose.
When Britain first her fields with Villages had fill'd,
Her people wexing still, and wanting where to build,
They oft dislodg'd the hart, and set their houses, where
He in the broom and brakes had long time made his lair.
Of all the Forests here within this mighty Isle,
If those old Britons then me Sovereign did instyle,
I needs must be the great'st ; for greatness 'tis alone
That gives our kind the place : else were there many a one

For pleasantness of shade that far doth me excell.
But, of our Forests' kind the quality to tell,
We equally partake with wood-land as with plain,
Alike with hill and dale ; and every day maintain
The sundry kinds of beasts upon our copious wastes,
The men for profit breed, as well as those of chase.
Here Arden of herself ceas'd any more to show ;
And with her sylvan joys the Muse along doth go.
When Phoebus lifts his head out of the Winter's wave,
No sooner doth the earth her flowery bosom brave,
At such time as the year brings on the pleasant Spring,
But Hunts-up to the Morn the feath'red Sylvans sing :
And in the lower grove, as on the rising knole,
Upon the highest spray of every mounting pole,
Those Quiristers are perch'd with many a speckled breast.
Then from her burnish'd gate the goodly glitt'ring East
Gilds every lofty top, which late the humorous Night
Bespangled had with pearl, to please the Morning's sight :
On with the mirthful Quires, with their clear open throats,
Unto the joyful Morn so strain their warbling notes,
That hills and valleys ring, and even the echoing air
Seems all compos'd of sounds, about them everywhere.
The Throstell, with shrill sharps ; as purposely he song
T'awake the lustless Sun ; or chiding, that so long
He was in coming forth, that should the thickets thrill :
The Woosell near at hand, that hath a golden bill ;
As Nature him had mark'd of purpose, t'let us see
That from all other birds his tunes should different be :
For, with their vocal sounds, they sing to pleasant May ;
Upon his dulcet pipe the Merle doth only play.
When in the lower brake, the Nightingale hard-by,
In such lamenting strains the joyful hours doth ply,
As though the other birds she to her tunes would draw.

Thirteenth Song.

(2)

The Vale of Evesham

BUT, noble Muse, proceed immediately to tell
How Eusham's fertile Vale at first in liking fell
With Cotswold, that great King of Shepherds: whose proud site
When that fair Vale first saw, so nourish'd her delight,
That him she only lov'd: for wisely she beheld
The beauties clean throughout that on his surface dwell'd:
Of just and equal height two banks arising, which
Grew poor (as it should seem) to make some Valley rich:
Betwixt them thrusting out an elbow of such height,
As shrouds the lower soil; which, shadowed from the light,
Shoots forth a little grove, that in the summer's day
Invites the flocks, for shade that to the covert stray.
A Hill there holds his head, as though it told a tale,
Or stooped to look down, or whisper with a Vale;
Where little purling winds like wantons seem to dally,
And skip from bank to bank, from valley trip to valley.

Fourteenth Song.

(3)

London Town

O MORE than mortal man, that did this Town begin!
Whose knowledge found the plot, so fit to set it in.
What God, or heavenly power was harbour'd in thy breast,
From whom with such success thy labours should be blest?
Built on a rising bank, within a vale to stand,
And for thy healthful soil, chose gravel mix'd with sand.
And where fair Tames his course into a crescent casts
(That, forced by his tides, as still by her he hastes,

He might his surging waves into her bosom send)
Because too far in length, his Town should not extend.
And to the North and South, upon an equal reach,
Two hills their even banks do somewhat seem to stretch,
Those extremer winds from hurting it to let ;
And only level lies, upon the rise and set.
Of all this goodly Isle, where breathes most cheerful air,
And every way thereto the ways most smooth and fair ;
As in the fittest place, by man that could be thought,
To which by land, or sea, provision might be brought.
And such a road for ships scarce all the world commands,
As is the goodly Tames, near where Brute's City stands.
Nor any haven lies to which is more resort,
Commodities to bring, as also to transport :
Our kingdom that enrich'd (through which we flourish'd long)
Ere idle gentry up in such abundance sprung.
Now pestering all this Isle : whose disproportion draws
The public wealth so dry, and only is the cause
Our gold goes out so fast, for foolish foreign things,
Which upstart gentry still into our country brings ;
Who their insatiate pride seek chiefly to maintain
By that, which only serves to uses vile and vain :
Which our plain fathers erst would have accounted sin,
Before the costly coach, and silken stock came in ;
Before that Indian weed so strongly was imbrac'd ;
Wherein, such mighty sums we prodigally waste ;
That merchants long train'd up in gain's deceitful school,
And subtly having learn'd to sooth the humorous fool,
Present their painted toys unto this frantic gull,
Disparaging our tin, our leather, corn, and wool ;
When foreigners, with ours them warmly clothe and feed,
Transporting trash to us, of which we ne'er had need.

Sixteenth Song.

MICHAEL DRAYTON : *Polyolbion.*

VI

CAVALIER AND PURITAN

32. A.D. 1642.

After serving in the Scottish campaigns of 1639 and 1640, Colonel Richard Lovelace was chosen by the cavalier party in Kent to take and present to the House of Commons a petition praying for "the restoration of the bishops, the liturgy and Common Prayer." The petition was publicly burnt by the common hangman and Lovelace imprisoned for seven weeks in the Gatehouse Prison at Westminster.

To Althea from Prison

WHEN Love with unconfinéd wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair
And fetter'd to her eye,
The Gods that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses bound,
Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free—
Fishes that tipple in the deep
Know no such liberty.

When, (like committed linnets),
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty
And glories of my King;

When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlargéd winds, that curl the flood,
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage ;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage ;
If I have freedom in my love
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

RICHARD LOVELACE.

33. A.D. 1643.

To Lucasta, on going to the Wars

TELL me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field ;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As thou too shalt adore ;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honour more.

RICHARD LOVELACE.

34. A.D. 1645.

The Battle of Naseby, a victory for Cromwell and the Roundheads as decisive and disastrous to Charles and the Cavalier cause as was the battle of Flodden to Scotland and the Scottish King.

OH, wherefore come ye forth in triumph from the north,
With your hands, and your feet, and your raiment all red ?
And wherefore doth your rout send forth a joyous shout ?
And whence be the grapes of the wine-press which ye tread ?

Oh, evil was the root, and bitter was the fruit,
And crimson was the juice of the vintage that we trod ;
For we trampled on the throng of the haughty and the strong,
Who sate in the high places, and slew the saints of God.

It was about the noon of a glorious day of June,
That we saw their banners dance, and their cuirasses shine,
And the Man of Blood was there, with his long essenced hair,
And Astley, and Sir Marmaduke, and Rupert of the Rhine.

Like a servant of the Lord, with his Bible and his sword,
The general rode along us to form us to the fight,
When a murmuring sound broke out, and swelled into a shout,
Among the godless horsemen upon the tyrant's right.

And hark! like the roar of the billows on the shore,
The cry of battle rises along their charging line!
For God! for the Cause! for the Church! for the Laws!
For Charles King of England, and Rupert of the Rhine!

The furious German comes, with his clarions and his drums,
His bravoes of Alsatia and pages of Whitehall;
They are bursting on our flanks. Grasp your pikes, close your ranks;
For Rupert never comes but to conquer or to fall.

They are here! They rush on! We are broken! We are gone!
Our left is borne before them like stubble on the blast.
O Lord, put forth thy might! O Lord, defend the right!
Stand back to back, in God's name, and fight it to the last.

Stout Skippon hath a wound; the centre hath given ground.
Hark! hark! What means the trampling of horsemen on our rear?
Whose banner do I see, boys? 'Tis he, thank God, 'tis he, boys.
Bear up another minute: brave Oliver is here.

Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row,
Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the dykes,
Our cuirassiers have burst on the ranks of the Accurst,
And at a shock have scattered the forest of his pikes.

Fast, fast, the gallants ride, in some safe nook to hide
Their coward heads, predestined to rot on Temple Bar,
And he—he turns, he flies:—shame on those cruel eyes
That bore to look on torture, and dare not look on war!

Ho ! comrades, scour the plain ; and, ere ye strip the slain,
First give another stab to make your search secure ;
Then shake from sleeves and pockets their broad-pieces and lockets,
The tokens of the wanton, the plunder of the poor.

Fools ! your doublets shone with gold, and your hearts were gay and bold,
When you kissed your lily hands to your lemans to-day ;
And to-morrow shall the fox, from her chambers in the rocks,
Lead forth her tawny cubs to howl above the prey.

Where be your tongues that late mocked at heaven and hell and fate,
And the fingers that once were so busy with your blades,
Your perfumed satin clothes, your catches and your oaths,
Your stage-plays and your sonnets, your diamonds and your spades ?

Down, down, for ever down with the mitre and the crown,
With the Belial of the Court, and the Mammon of the Pope ;
There is woe in Oxford halls ; there is wail in Durham's stalls :
The Jesuit smites his bosom ; the bishop rends his cope.

And she of the seven hills shall mourn her children's ills,
And tremble when she thinks on the edge of England's sword ;
And the kings of earth in fear shall shudder when they hear
What the hand of God hath wrought for the Houses and the Word.

LORD MACAULAY.

35. A.D. 1648.

Fairfax, Cromwell's "right hand," commander of the new "Model Army" at Naseby. The occasion of Milton's sonnet was his reduction of Colchester, the last centre of Royalist resistance.

FAIRFAX, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze
And rumours loud, that daunt remotest kings;
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays
Her broken league to imp their serpent wings;
O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand,
(For what can war but endless war still breed?)
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith clear'd from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed,
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

JOHN MILTON.

36. A.D. 1650.

To the Lord General Cromwell

CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plough'd.
And on the neck of crownéd Fortune proud
Hast rear'd God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureat wreath. Yet much remains

To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than War: New foes arise
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains;
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.

JOHN MILTON.

37. A.D. 1633–39.

Song of the Emigrants in the Bermudas

The emigrants driven from England by the persecution of Charles I and Laud.

WHERE the remote Bermudas ride
In the ocean's bosom unespied,
From a small boat that rowed along,
The listening winds received this song :
" What should we do but sing his praise
That led us through the watery maze
Where he the huge sea-monsters wracks,
That lift the deep upon their backs,
Unto an isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own ?
He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms and prelates' rage.
He gave us this eternal spring
Which here enamels everything,
And sends the fowls to us in care,
On daily visits thro' the air.
He hangs in shades the orange bright,
Like golden lamps in a green night,
And does in the pomegranates close
Jewels more rich than Ormus shews.
He makes the figs our mouths to meet,
And throws the melons at our feet.
But apples plants of such a price,
No tree could ever bear them twice !

With cedars chosen by his hand
From Lebanon he stores the land ;
And makes the hollow seas that roar,
Proclaim the ambergrease on shore.
He cast (of which we rather boast)
The Gospel's pearl upon our coast ;
And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple where to sound his name.
O let our voice his praise exalt,
Till it arrive at heaven's vault,
Which then perhaps rebounding may
Echo beyond the Mexique bay."
Thus sang they in the English boat
A holy and a cheerful note,
And all the way, to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time.

ANDREW MARVELL (1621–1678).

VII

THE RESTORATION AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

38. A.D. 1666.

The Fire of London

SWELLED with our late successes on the foe,
Which France and Holland wanted power to cross,
We urge an unseen fate to lay us low
And feed their envious eyes with English loss.

Yet, London, empress of the northern clime,
By an high fate thou greatly didst expire;
Great as the world's which at the death of time
Must fall and rise a nobler frame by fire.

As when some dire usurper Heaven provides
To scourge his country with a lawless sway;
His birth perhaps some petty village hides
And sets his cradle out of Fortune's way;

Till, fully ripe, his swelling fate breaks out
And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on;
His Prince, surprised, at first no ill could doubt,
And wants the power to meet it when 'tis known.

Such was the rise of this prodigious fire,
Which, in mean buildings first obscurely bred,
From thence did soon to open streets aspire
And straight to palaces and temples spread.

The diligence of trades, and noiseful gain,
And luxury, more late, asleep were laid ;
All was the Night's, and in her silent reign
No sound the rest of Nature did invade.

In this deep quiet, from what source unknown,
Those seeds of fire their fatal birth disclose ;
And first few scattering sparks about were blown,
Big with the flames that to our ruin rose.

Then in some close-pent room it crept along
And, smouldering as it went, in silence fed ;
Till the infant monster, with devouring strong,
Walked boldly upright with exalted head.

The ghosts of traitors from the Bridge descend
With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice ;
About the fire into a dance they bend
And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.

Now streets grow thronged and busy as by day :
Some run for buckets to the hallowed quire ;
Some cut the pipes, and some the engines play,
And some, more bold, mount ladders to the fire.

In vain ; for from the east a Belgian wind
His hostile breath through the dry rafters sent ;
The flames impelled soon left their foes behind
And forward with a wanton fury went.

A key of fire ran all along the shore
And lighted all the river with a blaze ;
The wakened tides began again to roar,
And wondering fish in shining waters gaze.

The fire meantime walks in a broader gross ;
To either hand his wings he opens wide ;
He wades the streets, and straight he reaches cross
And plays his longing flames on the other side.

At first they warm, then scorch, and then they take ;
Now with long necks from side to side they feed ;
At length, grown strong, their mother-fire forsake,
And a new colony of flames succeed.

To every nobler portion of the town
The curling billows roll their restless tide ;
In parties now they straggle up and down,
As armies unopposed for prey divide.

One mighty squadron, with a sidewind sped,
Through narrow lanes his cumbered fire does haste,
By powerful charms of gold and silver led
The Lombard bankers and the Change to waste.

Another backward to the Tower would go
And slowly eat his way against the wind ;
But the main body of the marching foe
Against the imperial palace is designed.

Now day appears ; and with the day the King,
Whose early care had robbed him of his rest ;
Far off the cracks of falling houses ring
And shrieks of subjects pierce his tender breast.

Near as he draws, thick harbingers of smoke
With gloomy pillars cover all the place ;
Whose little intervals of night are broke
By sparks that drive against his sacred face.

Nor with an idle care did he behold :
  Subjects may grieve, but monarchs must redress ;
He cheers the fearful and commends the bold
  And makes despairers hope for good success.

Himself directs what first is to be done
  And orders all the succours which they bring ;
The helpful and the good about him run
  And form an army worthy such a king.

The wanting orphans saw with watery eyes
  Their founders' charity in dust laid low,
And sent to God their ever-answered cries ;
  For He protects the poor who made them so.

Nor could thy fabric, Paul's, defend thee long,
  Though thou wert sacred to thy Maker's praise,
Though made immortal by a poet's song,
  And poets' songs the Theban walls could raise.

The daring flames peeped in and saw from far
  The awful beauties of the sacred quire ;
But, since it was profaned by civil war,
  Heaven thought it fit to have it purged by fire.

Now down the narrow streets it swiftly came
  And, widely opening, did on both sides prey ;
This benefit we sadly owe the flame,
  If only ruin must enlarge our way.

JOHN DRYDEN : *Annus Mirabilis.*

39. A.D. 1691.

Song from Dryden's "King Arthur or the British Worthy: A Dramatick Opera, performed at the Queen's Theatre by their Majesties' servants: the poem was the last piece of service which I have the honour to do for my gracious Master, King Charles the Second." Purcell's musical setting, as "Aria for soprano in the opera," sung by Venus to Britannia, is as celebrated as Dryden's poem. "There is nothing better than what I intended but the music, which has since arrived to a greater perfection in England than ever formerly, especially passing through the artfull hands of Mr. Purcell."

FAIREST isle, all isles excelling,
Seat of pleasures and of loves;
Venus here shall choose her dwelling,
And forsake her Cyprian groves.

Cupid from his favourite nation,
Care and envy will remove;
Jealousy, that poisons passion,
And despair, that dies for love.

Gentle murmurs, sweet complaining,
Sighs that blow the fire of love;
Soft repulses, kind disdaining,
Shall be all the pains you prove.

Every swain shall pay his duty,
Grateful every nymph shall prove;
And as these excel in beauty,
Those shall be renowned for love.

JOHN DRYDEN.

40. A.D. 1704.

The quiet but intense bitterness of this satire upon war and the aftermath of war may be contrasted with bitter and unquiet violence of Wilfred Owen and Sassoon on the same subject in the section upon the Great War.

After Blenheim

IT was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild, Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet
In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head.
And with a natural sigh—
"'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in that great victory."

" I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about ;
And often when I go to plough
The ploughshare turns them out.
For many thousand men," said he,
" Were slain in that great victory."

" Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
Young Peterkin, he cries ;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes ;
" Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for."

" It was the English," Kaspar cried,
" Who put the French to rout ;
But what they fought each other for
I could not well make out ;
But everybody said," quoth he,
" That 'twas a famous victory.

" My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by ;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly.
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

" With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born baby died :
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

" They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won ;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun ;
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

" Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene."
" Why 'twas a very wicked thing ! "
Said little Wilhelmine.
" Nay, nay, my little girl," quoth he,
" It was a famous victory.

" And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win."
" But what good came of it at last ? "
Quoth little Peterkin.
" Why, that I cannot tell," said he,
" But 'twas a famous victory."

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

41. A.D. 1746.

Dirge for the Fallen ; any time, any place. The actual occasion was the loss of English lives sustained at the battle of Fontenoy.

How Sleep the Brave

HOW sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest !
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By forms unseen their dirge is sung :
There Honour comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay ;
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell a weeping hermit there !

W. Collins.

42. A.D. 1782.

The *Royal George*, ship of the line of 108 guns, whilst undergoing repairs at Spithead, on the morning of August 29, was suddenly overturned by a gust of wind and sunk with all her crew.

The Loss of the "Royal George"

TOLL for the brave !
The brave that are no more !
All sunk beneath the wave
Fast by their native shore.

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset ;
Down went the "Royal George"
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave !
Brave Kempenfelt is gone ;
His last sea-fight is fought,
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle ;
No tempest gave the shock,
She sprang no fatal leak,
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath,
  His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
  With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
  Once dreaded by our foes !
And mingle with our cup
  The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
  And she may float again.
Full charged with England's thunder,
  And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
  His victories are o'er ;
And he and his eight hundred
  Shall plough the wave no more.

WILLIAM COWPER.

43. A.D. 1737.

"This paper is a sort of bill of complaint. . . . If it have any thing pleasing, it will be that by which I am most desirous to please, the truth and the sentiment."—POPE: *Advertisement to the Epistles.*

VIRTUE may choose the high or low Degree,
'Tis just alike to Virtue, and to me;
Dwell in a Monk, or light upon a King,
She's still the same, belov'd, contented thing.
Vice is undone, if she forgets her Birth,
And stoops from Angels to the Dregs of Earth:
But 'tis the *Fall* degrades her to a Whore;
Let *Greatness* own her, and she's mean no more;
Her Birth, her Beauty, Crowds and Courts confess;
Chaste Matrons praise her, and grave Bishops bless;
In golden Chains the willing World she draws,
And hers the Gospel is, and hers the Laws,
Mounts the Tribunal, lifts her scarlet head,
And sees pale Virtue carted in her stead.
Lo! at the wheels of her Triumphal Car,
Old England's Genius, rough with many a Scar,
Dragg'd in the dust! his arms hang idly round,
His Flag inverted trails along the ground!
Our Youth, all livery'd o'er with foreign Gold,
Before her dance: behind her crawl the Old!
See thronging Millions to the Pagod run,
And offer Country, Parent, Wife, or Son!
Hear her black Trumpet thro' the Land proclaim,
That NOT TO BE CORRUPTED IS THE SHAME.

In Soldier, Churchman, Patriot, Man in Pow'r,
'Tis Av'rice all, Ambition is no more!
See, all our Nobles begging to be Slaves!
See, all our Fools aspiring to be Knaves!
The Wit of Cheats, the Courage of a Whore,
Are what ten thousand envy and adore;
All, all look up, with reverential Awe,
At Crimes that 'scape, or triumph o'er the Law;
While Truth, Worth, Wisdom, daily they decry—
"Nothing is Sacred now but Villainy."
Yet may this Verse (if such a Verse remain)
Shew, there was one who held it in disdain.

ALEXANDER POPE: *Epilogue to the Satires.*

44. A.D. 1770.

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds :

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn
Or busy housewife ply her evening care :
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke ;
How jocund did they drive their team afield !
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour :—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death ?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked to extasy the living lyre :

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll ;
Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear :
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes

Their lot forbad : nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined ;
Forbad to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind ;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray ;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply :
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind ?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate ;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
" Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn ;

" There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

" Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove ;
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

" One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree ;
Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he ;

" The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne,—
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown ;
Fair science frown'd not on his humble birth
And melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere ;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send :
He gave to misery (all he had) a tear,
He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

THOMAS GRAY.

45. A.D. 1770.

The Deserted Village

SWEET Auburn ! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed :
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene !
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topped the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made !
How often have I blessed the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree ;
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed ;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round ;
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired ;

The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
By holding out to tire each other down ;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place ;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please ;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed ;
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green :
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain :
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way.
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away, thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay :
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;
A breath can make them as a breath has made :
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man ;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more :
His best companions, innocence and health ;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered ; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose ;
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green ;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes, my latest years to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose :

I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw
And tell of all I felt and all I saw ;
And as an hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labour with an age of ease ;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 't is hard to combat, learns to fly !
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep ;
No surly porter stands in guilty state
To spurn imploring famine from the gate ;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend ;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While Resignation gently slopes the way ;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past !

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose ;
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below ;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,

The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ;
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring ;
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn ;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild ;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year ;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place ;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train ;
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain :
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there and had his claims allowed ;

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire and talked the night away ;
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe ;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings leaned to virtue's side ;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all ;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul ;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place ;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;
Even children followed with endearing wile
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed ;

To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was and stern to view ;
I knew him well, and every truant knew ;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face ;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned ;
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew ;
'T was certain he could write and cipher too ;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even though vanquished, he could argue still ;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around ;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.

Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place ;
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door ;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day ;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose ;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen boughs and flowers and fennel gay ;
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain transitory splendours ! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall ?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart ;
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care ;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail ;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear ;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round ;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be pressed,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train ;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art ;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway ;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;
And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'T is yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and an happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore ;
Hoards even beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied ;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage and hounds ;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their growth ;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green ;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies ;

While thus the land, adorned for pleasure all,
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorned and plain,
Sesure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes ;
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress.
Thus fares the land, by luxury betrayed,
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed ;
But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise ;
While, scourged by famine, from the smiling land
The mournful peasant leads his humble band ;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah ! where shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride ?
If to some common's fenceless limits strayed,
He drives his flocks to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped—what waits him there ?
To see profusion that he must not share ;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury and thin mankind ;
To see each joy the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade ;

Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here, richly decked, admits the gorgeous train ;
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !
Sure these denote one universal joy !
Are these thy serious thoughts ?—Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distressed ;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn ;
Now lost to all ; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain ?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread !

Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charmed before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore ;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day ;

Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ;
Those poisonous fields, with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around ;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake ;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they ;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven ! what sorrows gloomed that parting day,
That called them from their native walks away ;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain,
For seats like these beyond the western main ;
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep !
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe ;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blessed the cot where every pleasure rose,
And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly dear ;

Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own;
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till, sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land:
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness are there;
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;

Thou guide by which the noble arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
Farewell, and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of the inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possessed,
Though very poor, may still be very blest;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the laboured mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

46. A.D. 1798.

In Alarm at the Prospect of an Invasion

O BRITONS! O my brethren! I have told
Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.
Nor deem my zeal or factious or mistimed;
For never can true courage dwell with them,
Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look
At their own vices. We have been too long
Dupes of a deep delusion! Some, belike,
Groaning with restless enmity, expect
All change from change of constituted power;
As if a Government had been a robe,
On which our vice and wretchedness were tagged
Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe
Pulled off at pleasure. Fondly these attach
A radical causation to a few
Poor drudges of chastising Providence,
Who borrow all their hues and qualities
From our own folly and rank wickedness,
Which gave them birth and nursed them. Others, meanwhile,
Dote with a mad idolatry; and all
Who will not fall before their images,
And yield them worship, they are enemies
Even of their country!
Such have I been deemed—
But, O dear Britain! O my Mother Isle!
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,

A husband, and a father ! who revere
All bonds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
O native Britain ! O my Mother Isle !
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of the God in nature,
All lovely and all honourable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being ?
There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country. O divine
And beauteous island ! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me !—
May my fears,
My filial fears, be vain ! and may the vaunts
And menace of the vengeful enemy
Pass like the gust, that roared and died away
In the distant tree : which heard, and only heard
In this low dell, bowed not the delicate grass.
But now the gentle dew-fall sends abroad
The fruit-like perfume of the golden furze :
The light has left the summit of the hill,
Though still a sunny gleam lies beautiful,
Aslant the ivied beacon. Now farewell,
Farewell awhile, O soft and silent spot !
On the green sheep-track, up the heathy hill,
Homeward I wind my way ; and lo ! recalled
From bodings that have wellnigh wearied me,
I find myself upon the brow, and pause

Startled ! And after lonely sojourning
In such a quiet and surrounded nook,
This burst of prospect, here the shadowy main,
Dim-tinted, there the mighty majesty
Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
And elmy fields, seems like society—
Conversing with the mind, and giving it
A livelier impulse and a dance of thought !
And now, belovèd Stowey ! I behold
Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms
Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend ;
And close behind them, hidden from my view,
Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe
And my babe's mother dwell in peace ! With light
And quickened footsteps thitherward I tend,
Remembering thee, O green and silent dell.
And grateful, that by nature's quietness
And solitary musings, all my heart
Is softened, and made worthy to indulge
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE : *Fears in Solitude.*

VIII

THE ERA OF NAPOLEON

47. A.D. 1801.

The Battle of the Baltic

Napoleon's attempt to revive the "Neutral League of the Baltic States" and unite Russia, Denmark, Sweden and Prussia against England was frustrated by the Battle of Copenhagen. This was the famous occasion on which Nelson, serving as second-in-command to Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, put the telescope to his blind eye, and by ignoring the signal for recall won a decisive victory, when all seemed on the point of being lost.

OF Nelson and the North
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce came forth
All the might of Denmark's crown,
And her arms along the deep proudly shone,
By each gun the lighted brand,
In a bold determined hand,
And the Prince of all the land
Led them on.

Like leviathans afloat
Lay their bulwarks on the brine;
While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line:
It was ten of April morn by the chime:
As they drifted on their path
There was silence deep as death;
And the boldest held his breath
For a time.

But the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene ;
And her van the fleeter rushed
O'er the deadly space between.
" Hearts of oak ! " our captains cried, when each gun
From its adamantine lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.

Again ! again ! again !
And the havoc did not slack,
Till a feeble cheer the Dane
To our cheering sent us back ;—
Their shots along the deep slowly boom :—
Then ceased—and all is wail,
As they strike the shattered sail ;
Or in conflagration pale
Light the gloom.

Out spoke the victor then
As he hailed them o'er the wave,
" Ye are brothers ! ye are men !
And we conquer but to save :
So peace instead of death let us bring ;
But yield, proud foe, thy fleet
With the crews, at England's feet,
And make submission meet
To our King."

Then Denmark blessed our chief
That he gave her wounds repose ;
And the sounds of joy and grief
From her people wildly rose,
As death withdrew his shades from the day :

While the sun looked smiling bright
O'er a wide and woeful sight,
Where the fires of funeral light
Died away.

Now joy, Old England, raise
For the tidings of thy might,
By the festal cities' blaze,
Whilst the wine-cup shines in light;
And yet amidst that joy and uproar,
Let us think of them that sleep
Full many a fathom deep
By thy wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore!

Brave hearts! to Britain's pride
Once so faithful and so true,
On the deck of fame that died
With the gallant good Riou;
Soft sigh the winds of Heaven o'er their grave!
While the billow mournful rolls
And the mermaid's song condoles,
Singing glory to the souls
Of the brave!

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

48. A.D. 1805.

The Cockpit of the "Victory"

A din of trampling and dragging overhead, which is accompanied by a continuous ground-bass roar from the guns of the warring fleets, culminating at times in loud concussions. The wounded are lying around in rows for treatment, some groaning, some silently dying, some dead. The gloomy atmosphere of the low-beamed deck is pervaded by a thick haze of smoke, powdered wood, and other dust, and is heavy with the fumes of gunpowder and candle-grease, the odour of drugs and cordials, and the smell from abdominal wounds.

Nelson, his face now pinched and wan with suffering, is lying undressed in a midshipman's berth, dimly lit by a lantern. Dr. Beatty, Dr. Magrath, the Rev. Dr. Scott the Chaplain, Burke the Purser, the Steward, and a few others stand around.

MAGRATH (*in a low voice*)

Poor Ram, and poor Tom Whipple, have just gone.

BEATTY

There was no hope for them.

NELSON (*brokenly*)

Who have just died ?

BEATTY

Two who were badly hit by now, my lord ;
Lieutenant Ram and Mr. Whipple.

NELSON

Ah !—
So many lives—in such a glorious cause . . .
I join them soon, soon, soon !—O where is Hardy ?
Will nobody bring Hardy to me—none ?
He must be killed, too. Surely Hardy's dead ?

A MIDSHIPMAN

He's coming soon, my lord. The constant call
On his full heed of this most mortal fight
Keeps him from hastening hither as he would.

NELSON

I'll wait, I'll wait. I should have thought of it.

(*Presently* HARDY *comes down.* NELSON *and he grasp hands.*

Hardy, how goes the day with us and England ?

HARDY

Well ; very well, thank God for't, my dear lord.
Villeneuve their Admiral has this moment struck,
And put himself aboard the " Conqueror ".
Some fourteen of their first-rates, or about,
Thus far we've got. The said " Bucencaure " chief :
The " Santa Ana ", the " Redoutable,"
The " Fougueux," the " Santisima Trinidad ",
" San Augustino ", " San Francisco ", "Aigle " ;
And our old " Swiftsure ", too, we've grappled back,
To every seaman's joy. But now their van
Has tacked to bear round on the " Victory "
And crush her by sheer weight of wood and brass :
Three of our best I am therefore calling up,
And make no doubt of worsting theirs, and France.

NELSON

That's well. I swore for twenty—But it's well.

HARDY

We'll have 'em yet ! But without you, my lord,
We have to make slow plodding do the deeds
That sprung by inspiration ere you fell ;
And on this ship the more particularly.

NELSON

No, Hardy.—Ever 'twas your settled fault
So modestly to whittle down your worth.
But I saw stuff in you which admirals need
When, taking thought, I chose the " Victory's " keel
To do my business with these braggarts in.
A business finished now, for me !—Good friend,
Slow shades are creeping on me . . . I scarce see you.

HARDY

The smoke from ships upon our win'ard side,
And the dust raised by their worm-eaten hulks,
When our balls touch 'em, blind the eyes, in truth.

NELSON

No ; it is not that dust ; 'tis dust of death
That darkens me.

(*A shock overhead.* HARDY *goes up. One or two other officers go up, and by and by return.*)

What was that extra noise ?

OFFICER

The " Formidable " passed us by, my lord,
And thumped a stunning broadside into us.—
But, on their side, the " Hero's " captain's fallen ;
The " Algeciras " has been boarded, too,
By Captain Tyler, and the captain shot :
Admiral Gravina desperately holds out ;
They say he's lost an arm.

NELSON

And we ourselves—
Who have we lost on board here ? Nay, but tell me !

BEATTY

Besides poor Scott, my lord, and Charles Adair,
Lieutenant Ram, and Whipple, captain's clerk,
There's Smith and Palmer, midshipmen, just killed,
And fifty odd of seamen and marines.

NELSON

Poor youngsters ! Scarred old Nelson joins you soon.

BEATTY

And wounded : Bligh, lieutenant ; Pasco, too,
And Reeves, and Peake, lieutenants of marines,
And Rivers, Westphall, Bulkeley, midshipmen,
With, of the crew, a hundred odd just now,
Unreckoning those late fallen not brought below.

BURKE

That fellow in the mizzen-top, my lord,
Who made it his affair to wing you thus,
We took good care to settle ; and he fell
Like an old rook, smack from his perch, stone dead.

NELSON

'Twas not worth while !—He was, no doubt, a man
Who in simplicity and sheer good faith
Strove but to serve his country. Rest be to him !
And may his wife, his friends, his little ones,
If such he had, be tided through their loss,
And soothed amid the sorrow brought by me.

(HARDY *re-enters*)

Who's that ? Ah—here you come ! How, Hardy, now ?

HARDY

The Spanish Admiral's rumoured to be wounded,
We know not with what truth. But, be as 'twill,

He sheers away with all he could call round,
And some few frigates, straight to Cadiz port.

(*A violent explosion is heard above the confused noises on deck. A midshipman goes above and returns.*)

MIDSHIPMAN (*in the background*)

It is the enemy's first-rate, the "Achille",
Blown to a thousand atoms!—While on fire,
Before she burst, the captain's woman there,
Desperate for life, climbed from the gunroom port
Upon the rudder-chains; stripped herself stark,
And swam for the Pickle's boat. Our men in charge,
Seeing her great breasts bulging on the brine,
Sang out, "A mermaid 'tis, by God!"—then rowed
And hauled her in.—

BURKE

Such unbid sights obtrude
On death's dyed stage!

MIDSHIPMAN

Meantime the "Achille" fought on,
Even while the ship was blazing, knowing well
The fire must reach their powder; which it did.
The spot is covered now with floating men,
Some whole, the main in parts; arms, legs, trunks, heads,
Bobbing with tons of timber on the waves,
And splinters looped with entrails of the crew.

NELSON (*arousing*)

Our course will be to anchor. Let them know.

HARDY

But let me ask, my lord, as needs I must,
Seeing your state, and that our work's not done,
Shall I, from you, bid Admiral Collingwood
Take full on him the conduct of affairs?

NELSON (*trying to raise himself*)

Not while I live, I hope ! No, Hardy ; no.
Give Collingwood my order. Anchor all !

HARDY (*hesitating*)

You mean the signal's to be made forthwith ?

NELSON

I do !—By God, if but our carpenter
Could rig me up a jury-backbone now,
To last one hour—until the battle's done,
I'd see to it ! But here I am—stove in—
Broken—all logged and done for ! Done, ay done !

BEATTY (*returning from the other wounded*)

My lord, I must implore you to lie calm !
You shorten what at best may not be long.

NELSON (*exhausted*)

I know, I know, good Beatty ! Thank you well,
Hardy, I was impatient. Now I am still.
Sit here a moment, if you have time to spare ?

(BEATTY *and the others retire, and the two abide in silence, except for the trampling overhead and the moans from adjoining berths.* NELSON *is apparently in less pain, seeming to doze.*)

NELSON (*suddenly*)

What are you thinking, that you speak no word ?

HARDY (*waking from a short reverie*)

Thoughts all confused, my lord—their needs on deck,
Your own sad state, and your unrivalled past ;
Mixed up with flashes of old things afar—
Old childish things at home, down Wessex way,
In the snug village under Blackdon Hill

Where I was born. The tumbling stream, the garden,
The placid look of the grey dial there,
Marking unconsciously this bloody hour,
And the red apples on my father's trees,
Just now full ripe.

NELSON

Ay, thus do little things
Steal into my mind, too. But ah, my heart
Knows not your calm philosophy !—There's one—
Come nearer to me, Hardy—One of all,
As you well guess, pervades my memory now ;
She, and my daughter—I speak freely to you.
'Twas good I made that codicil this morning
That you and Blackwood witnessed. Now she rests
Safe on the nation's honour . . . Let her have
My hair, and the small treasured things I owned,
And take care of her, as you care for me !

(HARDY *promises*)

NELSON (*resuming in a murmur*)

Does love die with our frame's decease, I wonder,
Or does it live on ever ? . . .

(*A silence.* BEATTY *approaches.*)

HARDY

Now I'll leave,
See if your order's gone, and then return.

NELSON (*symptoms of death beginning to change his face*)

Yes, Hardy ; yes ; I know it. You must go—
Here we shall meet no more ; since Heaven forfend
That care for me should keep you idle now,
When all the ship demands you. Beatty, too,
Go to the others who lie bleeding there ;
Them you can aid. Me you can render none !
My time here is the briefest.—If I live

But long enough I'll anchor . . . But—too late—
My anchoring's elsewhere ordered ! . . . Kiss me, Hardy :

(HARDY *bends over him*)

I'm satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty !

(HARDY *brushes his eyes with his hand, and withdraws to go above, pausing to look back before he finally disappears.*)

BEATTY (*watching Nelson*)

Ah !—Hush around ! . . .
He's sinking. It is but a trifle now
Of minutes with him. Stand you, please, aside,
And give him air.

(BEATTY, *the* CHAPLAIN, MAGRATH, *the* STEWARD *and* Attendants *continue to regard* NELSON. BEATTY *looks at his watch.*)

BEATTY

Two hours and fifty minutes since he fell,
And now he's going.

(*They wait.* NELSON *dies.*)

CHAPLAIN

Yes . . . He has homed to where
There's no more sea.

THOMAS HARDY : *The Dynasts.*

49. A.D. 1809.

The Burial of Sir John Moore

NOT a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried ;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly, at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning ;
By the struggling moonbeams misty light
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him ;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow ;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollow'd his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow !

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done
When the clock struck the hour for retiring:
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory.

CHARLES WOLFE.

50. A.D. 1815.

Waterloo

STOP !—for thy tread is on an Empire's dust !
An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below !
Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust ?
Nor column trophied for triumphal show ?
None ; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be ;—
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow !
And is this all the world has gain'd by thee,
Thou first and last of fields ! king-making Victory ?

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo !
How in an hour the power which gave annuls
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too !
In " pride of place " here last the eagle flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through ;
Ambition's life and labours all were vain ;
He wears the shatter'd links of the world's broken chain.

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men ;
A thousand hearts beat happily ; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,

Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it?—No; 't was but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

Within a window'd niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell;
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

And there was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war ;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar ;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star ;
While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—" The foe ! they come ! they come ! "

And wild and high the " Cameron's gathering " rose !
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes :—
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clanman's ears !

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave,—alas !
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope shall moulder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,

The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
Battle's magnificently stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is cover'd thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent!

LORD BYRON: *Childe Harold.*

51. A.D. 1802.

Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland

TWO Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

52. A.D. 1802.

London, 1802 : *Three Sonnets*

I

O FRIEND ! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show ; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom !—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :
The wealthiest man among us is the best :
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry ; and these we adore :
Plain living and high thinking are no more :
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

II

Milton ! thou shouldst be living at this hour :
England hath need of thee : she is a fen
Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;
Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart ;

Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea :
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

III

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, " with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish ; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old :
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake ; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In every thing we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

53. A.D. 1804.

Jerusalem

AND did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green ?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen ?

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills ?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark Satanic mills ?

Bring me my bow of burning gold !
Bring me my arrows of desire !
Bring me my spear ! O clouds unfold !
Bring me my Chariot of fire !

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

54. A.D. 1805.

Home-thoughts, from the Sea

The exact location in space and time of the writer is difficult to compute, since with Cape Saint Vincent behind on the port beam and Trafalgar full in front he yet sees Gibraltar in the dim distance, astonishingly to the north-east. It will not do to say that the ship is continuously moving on its voyage; for the whole poem is concerned with one single sunset and the thoughts engendered in the poet's mind by the sight of Trafalgar.

NOBLY, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the North-West
died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay;
Bluish mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest North-East distance, dawned Gibraltar
grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me: how can I help
England?"—say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and
pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

ROBERT BROWNING.

55. A.D. 1819.

England during the last years of George III

AN old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring,—
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—
An army, which liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield,—
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;
Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;
A Senate,—Time's worst statute unrepealed,—
Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

P. B. Shelley.

IX

THE VICTORIAN ERA

56. A.D. 1852.

Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington

FIRST PUBLISHED, 1852

(The Duke of Wellington died September, 1851 : he was buried in November. " We all knew that the funeral would be impressive, since it had been delayed for over a month for that very purpose. But I had never imagined such a spontaneous outburst of genuine grief and emotion as was evoked by the passing of the cortege from the crowds that lined the streets. A beloved father, one would have said, amongst his children passing to his rest."—CONTEMPORARY LETTER.)

I

BURY the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore ?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,

Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

V

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.

Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd :
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds :
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd :
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd ;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss ;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom :
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame ;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest ?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes ;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea ;
His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee ;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun ;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labour'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,

Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamour of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings ;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down ;
A day of onsets of despair !
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away ;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo !
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine !
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice

At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

VII

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers ;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control ;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts ;
He bad you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall ;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever ; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent ; even if they broke
In thunder, silent ; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke ;

Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right:
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
An affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:

He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he : his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure :
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory :
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see :
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung :
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain !
More than is of man's degree

Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere ;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane :
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will ;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears :
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears :
The black earth yawns : the mortal disappears ;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.

Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON.

57. A.D. 1842.

YOU ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent:

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON: *Love Thou Thy Land.*

58. A.D. 1844.

The Cry of the Children

I

DO ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years ?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,—
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows ;
The young birds are chirping in the nest ;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows ;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly !—
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

II

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so ?—
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago—
The old tree is leafless in the forest—
The old year is ending in the frost—
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest—
The old hope is hardest to be lost :
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland ?

III

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's grief abhorrent, draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy—
" Your old earth," they say, " is very dreary " ;
" Our young feet," they say, " are very weak ! "
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the old why they weep, and not the children,
For the outside earth is cold,—
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old.

IV

" True," say the young children, " it may happen
That we die before our time.
Little Alice died last year—the grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her—
Was no room for any work in the close clay :
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying, ' Get up, little Alice ! it is day.'
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries !—
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes,—
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud, by the kirk-chime !
It is good when it happens," say the children,
" That we die before our time."

V

Alas, alas, the children ! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have !
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city—
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do—
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty—
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through !
But they answer, " Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine ?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine !

VI

" For oh," say the children, " we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap—
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—
We fall upon our faces, trying to go ;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,
Through the coal-dark, underground—
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

VII

" For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—
Their wind comes in our faces,—
Till our hearts turn,—our head, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places—

Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling—
  Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall—
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—
  All are turning, all the day, and we with all.—
And, all day, the iron wheels are droning ;
    And sometimes we could pray,
' O ye wheels,' (breaking out in a mad moaning)
    ' Stop ! be silent for to-day ! ' "

VIII

Ay ! be silent ! Let them hear each other breathing
    For a moment, mouth to mouth—
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
    Of their tender human youth !
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
  Is not all the life God fashions or reveals—
Let them prove their inward souls against the notion
  That they live in you, or under you, O wheels !—
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
    Grinding life down from its mark ;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
    Spin on blindly in the dark.

IX

Now, tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
    To look up to Him and pray—
So the blessed One, who blesseth all the others,
    Will bless them another day.
They answer, " Who is God that He should hear us,
  While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred ?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
  Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word !

And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door :
Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,
Hears our weeping any more ?

X

" Two words, indeed, of praying we remember ;
And at midnight's hour of harm,—
' Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words except ' Our Father,'
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within His right hand which is strong.
' Our Father ! ' If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
' Come and rest with me, my child.'

XI

" But no ! " say the children, weeping faster,
" He is speechless as a stone ;
And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to ! " say the children,—" Up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us ; grief has made us unbelieving—
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind."
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach ?
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving—
And the children doubt of each.

XII

And well may the children weep before you ;
They are weary ere they run ;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun :
They know the grief of man, but not the wisdom ;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm—
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,—
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
No dear remembrance keep,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly :
Let them weep ! let them weep !

XIII

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity :—
" How long," they say, " how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart ?
Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants,
And your purple shows your path ;
But the child's sob curseth deeper in the silence
Than the strong man in his wrath ! "

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

59. A.D. 1845.

Song of the Shirt

WITH fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch—stitch—stitch !
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the " Song of the Shirt."

" Work—work—work !
While the cock is crowing aloof ;
And work—work—work
Till the stars shine through the roof !
It's oh to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work !

" Work—work—work !
Till the brain begins to swim ;
Work—work—work !
Till the eyes are heavy and dim,
Seam, and gusset, and band,—
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream !

" O men with Sisters dear !
O men with Mothers and Wives !
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives !
Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt !

" But why do I talk of Death ?
That phantom of grisly bone,—
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep ;
O God ! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap !

" Work—work—work !
My labour never flags ;
And what are its wages ? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shattered roof,—and this naked floor,—
A table,—a broken chair,—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there.

" Work—work—work !
From weary chime to chime,
Work—work—work !
As prisoners work for crime.
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumbed,
As well as the weary hand.

" Work—work—work !
In the dull December light,
And work—work—work !
When the weather is warm and bright,
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling,
As if to show me their sunny backs
And twit me with the spring.

" Oh ! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet,
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal !

" Oh ! but for one short hour !
A respite, however brief !—
No blessèd leisure for Love or Hope,
But only time for Grief !
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread."

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch—stitch—stitch !
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—
Would that its tone could reach the rich !—
She sang this " Song of the Shirt." TOM HOOD.

60. A.D. 1896.

Pro Rege Nostro

WHAT have I done for you,
England, my England ?
What is there I would not do,
England, my own ?
With your glorious eyes austere,
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear
As the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Round the world on your bugles blown !

Where shall the watchful Sun,
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own ?
When shall he rejoice agen
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
To the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Down the years on your bugles blown ?

Ever the faith endures,
England, my England :—
" Take and break us : we are yours,
England, my own !
Life is good, and joy runs high

Between English earth and sky :
Death is death ; but we shall die
To the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
To the stars on your bugles blown !

They call you proud and hard,
England, my England :
You with worlds to watch and ward,
England, my own !
You whose mailed hand keeps the keys
Of such teeming destinies,
You could know nor dread nor ease,
Were the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Round the Pit on your bugles blown ! ''

Mother of Ships whose might,
England, my England,
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,
England, my own,
Chosen daughter of the Lord,
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient Sword,
There's the menace of the Word
In the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Out of heaven on your bugles blown !

W. E. Henley.

X

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR AND AFTER

61. A.D. 1899.

The transports sail for South Africa. Southampton Dock: October, 1899.

Embarcation

HERE, where Vespasian's legions struck the sands,
And Cerdic with his Saxons entered in,
And Henry's army leapt afloat to win
Convincing triumphs over neighbour lands,

Vaster battalions press for further strands,
To argue in the self-same bloody mode
Which this late age of thought, and pact, and code,
Still fails to mend.—Now deckward tramp the bands,

Yellow as autumn leaves, alive as spring;
And as each host draws out upon the sea
Beyond which lies the tragical To-be,
None dubious of the cause, none murmuring,

Wives, sisters, parents, wave, white hands and smile
As if they know not that they weep the while.

THOMAS HARDY.

62. A.D. 1899.

Southampton Docks : October, 1899.

Departure

WHILE the far farewell music thins and fails,
And the broad bottoms rip the bearing brine—
All smalling slowly to the gray sea-line—
And each significant red smoke-shaft pales,

Keen sense of severance everywhere prevails,
Which shapes the late long tramp of mounting men
To seeming words that ask and ask again :
" How long, O striving Teutons, Slavs, and Gaels

Must your wroth reasonings trade on lives like these,
That are as puppets in a playing hand ?—
When shall the saner softer polities
Whereof we dream, have sway in each proud land
And patriotism, grown Godlike, scorn to stand
Bond slave to realms, but circle earth and seas ? "

THOMAS HARDY.

63. A.D. 1900.

The Volunteer

"HE leapt to arms unbidden,
Unneeded, over-bold;
His face by earth is hidden,
His heart in earth is cold.

"Curse on the reckless daring
That could not wait the call,
The proud fantastic bearing
That would be first to fall!"

O tears of human passion,
Blur not the image true;
This was not folly's fashion,
This was the man we knew.

HENRY NEWBOLT.

64. A.D. 1897.

Recessional

GOD of our fathers, known of old—
Lord of our far-flung battle-line—
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies—
The captains and the kings depart—
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

Far-call'd our navies melt away—
On dune and headland sinks the fire—
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe—
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard—
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding calls not Thee to guard—
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord !

RUDYARD KIPLING.

XI

THE GREAT WAR. 1914–1918

65. A.D. 1914.

Men who March Away

Song of the Soldiers. September 5, 1914.

WHAT of the faith and fire within us
Men who march away
Ere the barn-cocks say
Night is growing gray,
Leaving all that here can win us;
What of the faith and fire within us
Men who march away?

Is it a purblind prank, O think you,
Friend with the musing eye,
Who watch us stepping by
With doubt and dolorous sigh?
Can much pondering so hoodwink you
Is it a purblind prank, O think you,
Friend with the musing eye?

Nay. We well see what we are doing,
Though some may not see—
Dalliers as they be—
England's need are we;
Her distress would leave us rueing:
Nay. We'll see what we are doing,
Though some may not see.

In our heart of hearts believing
  Victory crowns the just,
  And that braggarts must
  Surely bite the dust,
Press we to the field ungrieving,
In our heart of hearts believing
  Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us
  Men who march away
  Ere the barn-cocks say
  Night is growing gray,
Leaving all that here can win us;
Hence the faith and fire within us
  Men who march away.

THOMAS HARDY.

66. A.D. 1915.

In Time of "The Breaking of Nations"

I

ONLY a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

II

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass:
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

III

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

THOMAS HARDY.

67. A.D. 1914.

Five Sonnets, 1914

I

Peace

NOW God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,
Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
And all the little emptiness of love!

Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release there,
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,
Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there
But only agony, and that has ending;
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

II

Safety

DEAR! of all happy in the hour, most blest
He who has found our hid security,
Assured in the dark tides of the world that rest,
And heard our word, "Who is so safe as we?"

We have found safety with all things undying,
The winds, and morning, tears of men and mirth,
The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying,
And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth.
We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing.
We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever.
War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,
Secretly armed against all death's endeavour;
Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall;
And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

III

The Dead

BLOW out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

IV

The Dead

THESE hearts were woven of human joys and cares,
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colours of the earth.

These had seen movement, and heard music : known
  Slumber and waking ; loved ; gone proudly friended ;
Felt the quick stir of wonder ; sat alone ;
  Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,
  Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
  Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

V

THE SOLDIER

IF I should die, think only this of me :
  That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
  In that rich earth a richer dust concealed ;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
  Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
  Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
  A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
    Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given ;
Her sights and sounds ; dreams happy as her day ;
  And laughter, learnt of friends ; and gentleness,
    In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

RUPERT BROOKE.

68. A.D. 1916.

Fulfilment

WAS there love once ? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once ? Grief yet is mine.
Other loves I have, men rough, but men who stir
More grief, more joy, than love of thee and thine.

Faces, cheerful, full of whimsical mirth,
Lined by the wind, burned by the sun ;
Bodies enraptured by the abounding earth,
As whose children we are brethren : one.

And any moment may descend hot death
To shatter limbs ! pulp, tear, blast
Beloved soldiers who love rough life and breath
Not less for dying faithful to the last.

O the fading eyes, the grimed face turned bony,
Oped mouth gushing, fallen head,
Lessening pressure of a hand shrunk, clammed, and stony !
O sudden spasm, release of the dead !

Was there love once ? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once ? Grief yet is mine.
O loved, living, dying, heroic soldier,
All, all, my joy, my grief, my love, are thine !

ROBERT NICHOLS.

69. A.D. 1917.

Suicide in Trenches

I KNEW a simple soldier boy
Who grinned at life in empty joy,
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,
And whistled early with the lark.

In winter trenches, cowed and glum
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,
He put a bullet through his brain.
No one spoke of him again.

. . . . .

You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

70. A.D. 1917.

Remorse

LOST in the swamp and welter of the pit,
He flounders off the duck-boards; only he knows
Each flash and spouting crash,—each instant lit
When gloom reveals the streaming rain. He goes
Heavily, blindly on. And, while he blunders,
"Could anything be worse than this?"—he wonders,
Remembering how he saw those Germans run,
Screaming for mercy among the stumps of trees:
Green-faced, they dodged and darted: there was one
Livid with terror, clutching at his knees. . . .
Our chaps were sticking 'em like pigs. . . . "O hell!"
He thought—"there's things in war one dare not tell
Poor father sitting safe at home, who reads
Of dying heroes and their deathless deeds."

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

71. A.D. 1917.

The Glory of Women

YOU love us when we're heroes, home on leave,
Or wounded in a mentionable place.
You worship decorations ; you believe
That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace.
You make us shells. You listen with delight,
By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.
You crown our distant ardours while we fight,
And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed.

You can't believe that British troops " retire "
When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run,
Trampling the terrible corpses—blind with blood.
O German mother dreaming by the fire,
While you are knitting socks to send your son
His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

72. A.D. 1918.

Dulce et decorum est

" My subject is war and the pity of war. The poetry is in the pity."
—Wilfred Owen.

BENT double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind ;
Drunk with fatigue ; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas ! Gas ! Quick, boys !—An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And floundering like a man in fire or lime.—
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin ;

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie : Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

WILFRED OWEN.

73. A.D. 1918.

Asleep

UNDER his helmet, up against his pack,
After the many days of work and waking,
Sleep took him by the brow and laid him back.
And in the happy no-time of his sleeping,
Death took him by the heart. There was a quaking
Of the aborted life within him leaping . . .
Then chest and sleepy arms once more fell slack.
And soon the slow, stray blood came creeping
From the intrusive lead, like ants on track.

. . . . . .

Whether his deeper sleep lie shaded by the shaking
Of great wings, and the thoughts that hung the stars,
High-pillowed on calm pillows of God's making
Above these clouds, these rains, these sleets of lead,
And these winds' scimitars ;
—Or whether yet his thin and sodden head
Confuses more and more with the low mould,
His hair being one with the grey grass
And finished fields of autumns that are old . . .
Who knows ? Who hopes ? Who troubles ? Let it pass !
He sleeps. He sleeps less tremulous, less cold,
Than we who must awake, and waking, say Alas !

WILFRED OWEN.

74. A.D. 1919.

For the Fallen

WITH proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables at home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time:
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
  Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
  As the stars are known to the Night.

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
  Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
  To the end, to the end, they remain.

LAURENCE BINYON.

THE END

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